

JUNE 1915

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THE
RED BOOK
MAGAZINE

Humphrey
1915

Rupert Hughes
Arthur Stringer
Mrs. Humphry Wa
Harris Dickson
Albert Payson Terhu
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The story of a genius' wife, woven into a novel by the most brilliant woman writer of our time.
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Illustrated by C. H. Tafts
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The final installment of this unusual novel of the depths and heights of New York.
By Rupert Hughes -----322
Illustrated by James Montgomery Flagg
- The Island of Surprise** -----
Another surprising installment in Dr. Brady's absorbing new novel.
By Cyrus Townsend Brady -376
Illustrated by Walter Tittle

TWELVE PACE-SETTING SHORT STORIES

- Mis' Jinny's Boy** -----
The best short story that has come from the pen of the author of "The Prairie Wife."
By Arthur Stringer -----226
Illustrated by J. H. Gardner-Soper
- Daughter Millicent** -----
She was no fool. "That's the trouble," wailed her mother. "I could manage just a plain fool girl."
By Ida M. Evans -----237
Illustrated by Robert A. Graef
- The Amateur Liar** -----
The story of the husband's "fib" which grew like a snowball rolling down hill.
By Albert Payson Terhune -262
Illustrated by J. Henry
- Straight in the Eye** -----
A romance of the new South; the first Dickson story with no negro characters in it.
By Harris Dickson -----274
Illustrated by John Newton Howitt
- The Escape of Bill Newlands** -----
The first story by a new author; a powerful tale of the workings of fate.
By Ray Sprigle -----287
Illustrated by M. Leone Bracker
- The Pool Ball** -----
"He's so bald you can see what he is thinking," was the way they spoke of this hero.
By Kennett Harris -----298
Illustrated by William Van Dresser
- The Battle of Shiny Ford** -----
The love story of the young man who was afraid he had too much money.
By Winona Godfrey -----312
Illustrated by R. F. James
- One Hundred Dollars Reward** -----
Philo Gubb, the correspondence school detective, trails the stolen Togbury jewel.
By Ellis Parker Butler -----333
Illustrated by Rea Irvin
- The Rose-Pink Wind of Love** -----
The story of the three winds and the gunner's mate of the U. S. S. *Paducah*.
By James Francis Dwyer ---343
Illustrated by William Oberhardt
- The Man in the Gray Suit** -----
The story of the detective sergeant who was "shelved" in a political shake-up.
By Frederick R. Becholdt ---357
Illustrated by Grant T. Reynard
- In Society** -----
A vaudeville story by the creator of the Johnny Trippit and Goldie Dailey stories.
By Helen Van Campen -----365
Illustrated by Coyle Christy Tincher
- The Birth of a Butterfly** -----
The butcher's buxom wife decides that while *he* may be a grub, *she* is going to be a butterfly.
By Gordan V. May -----390

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—baked ham

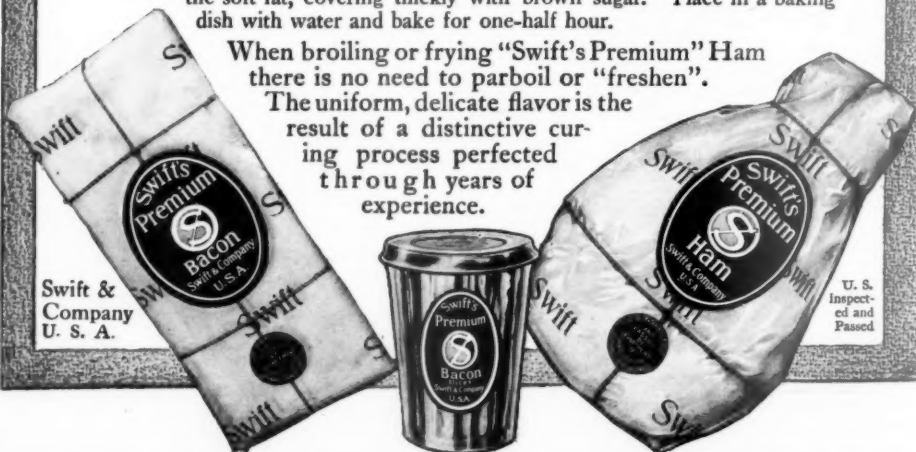
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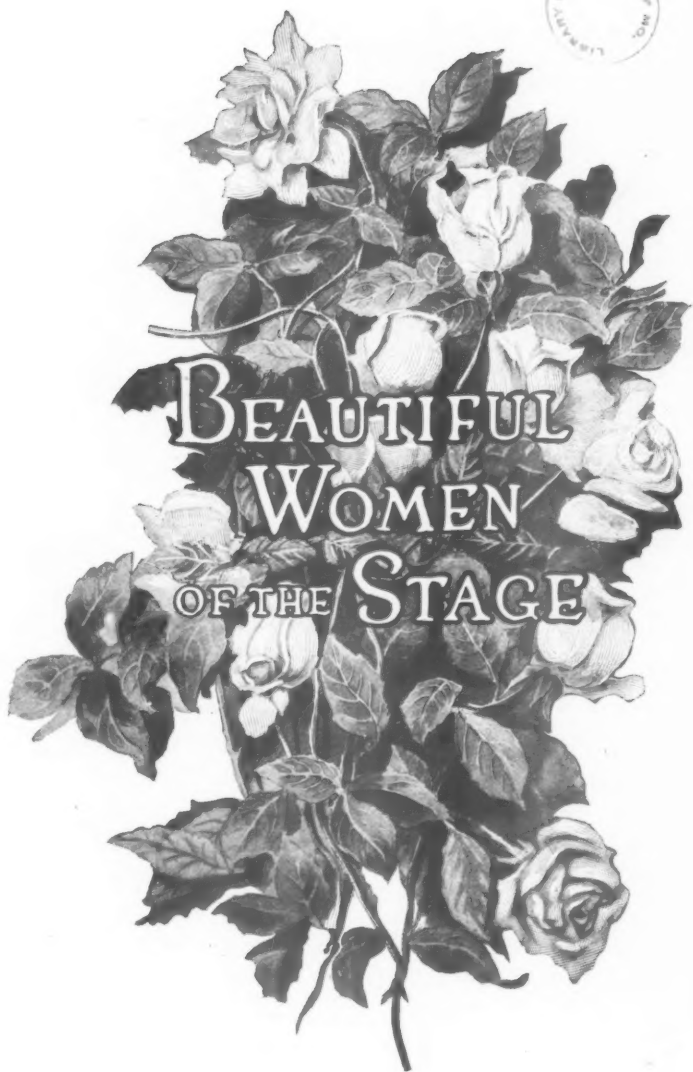
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JEANETTE BERGERIE
in Vaudeville
Photograph by J. J. Moody, New York



Among his first callers was Faxon, looking rather worn, but amiable as ever, and expatiating upon the sympathetic grief of all the Faxons.

From "The Battle of Shiny Ford," the love story of a young man who had too much money, by Winona Godfrey, which begins on page 312.

June
1915

THE
RED BOOK
MAGAZINE

Vol. XXV
No. 2

RAY LONG, Editor



THE thousands of readers who have been thrilled by Rupert Hughes' two great serials, "Empty Pockets" and "What Will People Say?" will appreciate the announcement that Mr. Hughes is putting his fine enthusiasm into another novel which will be published first as a serial in THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE.



The vigor, newness and masterly writing in "Empty Pockets," which comes to its conclusion in this issue, won for it a success even greater than that of "What Will People Say?" And the new novel will excel "Empty Pockets," for Mr. Hughes' power is growing every day.

In "What Will People Say?" he gave a vivid picture of the wealthy smart set of New York. In "Empty Pockets" he drew a fine contrast between the very poor and the very rich of the most fascinating city in the world. In the new novel he will set his stage on that ground between rich and poor which a wise newspaper publisher calls "the great ninety per cent of Americans."

The new story is going to be Rupert Hughes' best. That means the best novel of the best novelist in the United States. It will begin in an early issue of THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE.

THE RED BOOK
is setting the
pace in the
magazine world

Mis' Jinny's Boy



ARTHUR STRINGER never wrote a better story than this—and he has written some of the best that have been published in recent years. It is the story told by the old negro family servant of the bride from the South who went to live in Canada.

UNCLE MOSE, oughtn't somebody to shoot that old hound?"

The decrepit negro turned slowly about and blinked at the two youthful figures in glimmering white. Then he looked down at the dog asleep in the sunlight.

"No, indeedy, Mis' Margot! Dat's mah houn'! Mis' Jinny's boy done gib me dat dawg!"

"But he's so old!"

The girl ran a hand along the dog's wrinkled back. The movement was dainty yet pitying. "And Susan says his teeth are gone."

The taller of the two girls opened a pale green parasol and moved closer to the little group, stepping with fawn-like fastidiousness over the lush grass still steaming in the sunlight. The aura of youth about her slender body was like the languid airiness of a silver-birch in early summer.

"How old is he, Uncle Mose?" she asked abstractedly.

The old servant raked through the snow-white kinks of his head with a meditative finger. Then he put down his polishing-cloth.

"How ol' is dat houn' o' mine, Mis' Effel?"

The May sun shone down out of a sky of cobalt blue on the nickel rims

of the motor-lamps which Uncle Mose had been making a pretense of polishing, on the warm red of the brick garage, on the billowing white and pink of a snow-apple tree in full bloom above a yellow-painted lattice summer-house, on the vivid green of the lawn grass still wet with hose-water. Pigeons cooed from the stable-roof. On the grape-trellis behind the summer-house fluted a spring robin. The hum of bees filled the afternoon with a lazy drone. A soft breeze fluttered the skirts of the two girls in white. The old hound, with his nose flat between his fore-paws, raised an indifferent eyelid and then lowered it again.

"How ol' is dat dawg?" ruminated Uncle Mose as he sat down on the white-rubbed running-board of the newly washed car and solemnly contemplated the hound that lay as prone as though anesthetized by the warm spring sunlight. "Why, Mis' Effel, I raikon dat dawg's clean as ol' as you and Mis' Margot put t'gether!"

The younger of the two girls laughed softly.

"That would make him almost forty, Uncle Mose!" she remonstrated.

"Dere's some animiles lives a uncommon long time, Mis' Margot," avowed the old negro. "Mos' as long as some niggers!"



By Arthur Stringer

Author of
"The Prairie Wife,"
"The Counterfeiters,"
"The Wiretappers," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY
J. H. GARDNER-SOPER

"Gawd strike me dead, Mis' Jinny,
but dat's the mos' beau'f'l baby I
ever clapped my ol' eyes on."

"But not dogs and horses, Uncle Mose!"

"Indeedy dey do, Mis' Effel. Dey do in *some* famblies. De animiles in Mis' Jinny's fambly always got drefful ol'. It was always de humans what died young. An' it was Mis' Jinny's boy gib me dat dawg."

"He used to call Judge Howell's wife Miss Jinny," explained the older of the two girls. "That was Garnet's mother."

THE younger girl, who had been listening to the robin, nodded her head. A cloud passed like a dark wing across the grass. It lasted only a moment. The sun came out again, strong and white.

"Dat's right, Mis' Effel; Masta Gah-net was Mis' Jinny's boy. An' I raiknon you notice how dat ol' dawg lif' his haid when you say his name dataway. He knows. He's the wises' ol' dawg I ever see. He's mos' as wise as Jo-Anne was."

"Who was Jo-Anne?"

"Jo-Anne was Mis' Jinny's hoss. Dey was a team, Dahby and Jo-Anne. You see, Mis' Effel, Mis' Jinny was a Pinkney, one o' the Virginia Pinkneys. Her folks come No'th to Canada 'bout the

close of the Wah: dey was sent off by the Yankees for suttin s'ditious acts an' speechifyin'. I come along wid the folks, for I was the Major's hoss-boy. Dey bought the Buthnott Fahm, and Major Pinkney he laid out to run dat fahm. Dey had a hawd time in dis country—mos' things was so dif'rent, and in dose days the ol' Major he always called it a dam' wilderness. I was always his hoss-boy, an' the ol' Major he says to me, 'Mose, I'se gwine to bring up some Virginia stock and show dese Eskimmo blue-noses what hoss-flesh is!' But dem Pinkneys was too biggety-feelin' for truckin' and tradin', an' the ol' Major wasn't the managin' kind, no-how. De fahm she jes' went to rack an' roon, clear to rack an' roon. After the Major had his stroke, me an' Mis' Jinny we done the bes' we could!

"Mis' Jinny was jes' a girl in dem days—Lo'dy, jes' look at da ol' houn' wag his ear when he catch the soun' of dat name! But Mis' Jinny was the mos' high-speerited girl ever took a seben-bar gate 'stead of gittin' outen the saddle to unlock 'im, an' many a day I see her lope over a rail-fence 'stead of

ridin' roun' by the gap. She was the fines'-lookin' girl in Kent County, was Mis' Jinny, an' the summer the ol' Major had his secon' stroke an' Jedge Lowell come out from the county seat for to see 'bout the law papers, I raikon the Jedge was took wif Mis' Jinny fust day he clapped eyes on her.

"Seems I was a-puttin' the Jedge's team up 'bout six times a week, dat summer. 'Bout the las' word the ol' Major says to me was: 'Mose, don't you 'low our Jinny to hitch up wif no Eskimmo blue-nose.' But two mont's af'er the ol' Major was put away, Jedge Lowell he come to me an' say: 'Mose, Mis' Jinny says if she comes wif me, you's got to come too! How 'bout dat?' I says I's done willin' to go where Mis' Jinny fixes to go. The Jedge he was a cold man an' I raikon twict the age o' Mis' Jinny. But he laughed and he says, 'We all think a heap of Mis' Jinny, Mose!' I allow he was dead right 'bout dat.

"So when the Jedge marry Mis' Jinny an' dey move in the big red-brick over yonder on the ribber, I comes along too. And when the Jedge takes up the moht-gage on the ol' Buthnott Fahm an' buys it in for Mis' Jinny, Lo'dy, Lo'dy, how dat girl did carry on an' cry. You see, Missy, the Jedge was a rich man. He weren't like the ol' Major. Ev'ry-thing he tech'd jes' seemed to tuhn into money. He had a powerful cold eye an' he never cussed and laughed wif no nigger the way the ol' Major would. But he was mighty good to me, jes' for Mis' Jinny's sake. I raikon no men folks, white or black, was ever kinder to deir wimmen.

"THE secon' year dey was married he bought her the team, the team I tol' you 'bout, Dahby and Jo-Anne. Dey was a couple o' blue-grass thoroughbreds, a roan an' a bay, an' the Jedge he send me down to Covington for to fetch 'em across the Line. And I was powerful glad to git back, for the Souf aint the Souf it used to be; an' Lo'dy, I don't even talk like dem States niggers no moah! How dem ponies could trabbel! Mis' Jinny she rigs me out wif tight pants, an' boots wif yellow tops,

an' a green coat wif shiny buttons; and she sets me up on the rumble, an' ev'ry week we go zippin' out to the ol' Buthnott Fahm an' Mis' Jinny wanders round the ol' house and looks over the orchard and digs up some o' the roots outen the ol' flower-beds for to fetch back for the new town-house.

"One day the Jedge he comes to me an' says: 'Mose, I don't want Mis' Howell drivin' dat team o' colts no moah!' An' I says: 'Den we all better draw dem shoes and git 'em out to the Ol' Fahm!'—for I knew Mis' Jinny 'd keep on a-drivin' dem colts, no matter what the Jedge said. So he looks me in the eye and says: 'I raikon you're right, Mose! We'll jes' tuhn 'em out to grass for a few mont's!'

"Den b'fore the snow came Mis' Jinny had her li'l baby. Dat was Masta Gahnet!

"Mis' Jinny mos' died havin' that baby. But the fus' day she send for me, an' when I goes in kind o' scary, she han'd Masta Gahnet up to me an' says: 'Mose, dat's mine! *mine!*' An' she cry a li'l an' tak' him back an' I say: 'Gawd strike me daid, Mis' Jinny, but dat's the mos' beau'f'l baby I ever clapped my ol' eyes on!' Den she laugh and cry a li'l more an' say: 'Mose, you a ol' black fool!'—say it 'zactly the same as the ol' Major 'd say it. And dat made me think of the ol' days, an' I up and says to her: 'Lo'dy, Mis' Jinny, but wouldn't the ol' Major be clean out'n his boots to see you wif a child like dat?'

"When the Jedge come in and see Mis' Jinny cryin' again, he tak's me down to the lib'ry an' pours me out a tumbler of ol' poht wine an' den shakes han's wif me an' den tries to say something an' den walks to the windah blowin' his nose. Den he jes' pushes me out'n the lib'ry doah an' shets hisself in. My, my, I never see a father so proud 'bout havin' a chile. You see, Missy, the Jedge he was 'bout fohty years ol' den, an' I raikon he nebber understan' what havin' one of his own flesh and blood kind o' means to a man.

"An' when the spring come and Mis' Jinny got strong again, he sent for me for to fetch the team in from the ol'

Buthnott Fahm. An' ev'ry day him an' Mis' Jinny and Masta Gahnet dey go drivin' through the country, gittin' me to fill up the kerrige wif apple-blossoms an' wil'-plum flowers and enough field-posies for a fust-class fune'l. An' I seen Mis' Jinny hol' dat baby up aginst the nose of Dahby and Jo-Anne and say: 'I want my boy always to love animiles!' An' Lo'dy, but dat chile 'd pat dem sniffin' noses and squeal and laugh and weren't no more scart of a hoss 'n you is of a kitten. An' his mammy 'd say to me, 'Mose, dat boy's a Pinkney, sure 'nough!' An' b'fore Masta Gahnet 'd cut his front teef dat team *knew* dat baby.

"One Sunday when the Jedge was readin' his law-books under the big elum Mis' Jinny put Masta Gahnet on Jo-Anne's back, an' let 'im ride dat mare all by hisse'f, roun' and roun' the grape-arbor. An' when Masta Gahnet slap the reins and pull Jo-Anne in under a ol' black-heart cherry tree, the lowes' branch scrapes Masta Gahnet off'n his back, same as my hand 'd scrape a fly off'n dis fender. Dat mare jes' *know* she's 'sponsible for dat chile, for she stan' dere all a-tramble, not so much as liftin' one foot till the Jedge come an' hol' her haid while Mis' Jinny gits Masta Gahnet from b'tween her feet. Hurt? No, Mis' Effel, dat boy weren't hurt nohow, 'sceptin' for the scare. By the time he was six year ol', he was ridin' that hoss all over the town and across the Big Ditch culberts, wif six or seven dawgs trailin' behin'. For Masta Gahnet always was a great han' for dawgs. Dey was all kinds o' dawgs, an' dey all jes' natcher'ly took to dat boy, same as a hoss did. Why, Masta Gahnet 'd ride Jo-Anne clean up the gal'ry stairs, wif the Jedge gittin' scary an' warnin' him to stop an' his mammy c'mmandin' him to go ahead! But do you all s'pose dat Jo-Anne 'd let another chile, white or black, sit on his back? No, indeedy, not for a minit!"

"DEM was gran' times! Lo'dy, but dat boy did bring the joy o' life into dat ol' red-brick house on the ribber! Not dat Masta Gahnet was a *bad* boy. He was jes' high-speerited, like

Mis' Jinny—an' where dere's only one in a fam'bly dey natcher'ly gits a li'l indulged-like. He was sure a Pinkney. I raikon dat's what made his mammy understan' the boy better 'n the Jedge did. Not dat the Jedge didn't wo'ship the groun' dat boy walked on. Lo'dy, he jes' lived and wohked an' planned for dat boy, all his days. But Masta Gahnet an' Mis' Jinny was kind o' closer togeder, wid all the li'l secrets dat two young folks has.

"An' dat boy sure did like music. He'd play a mouf-organ or a banjo or a pianny, jes' by the ear, same as his mammy. Many's the time Masta Gahnet an' Mis' Jinny and ol' Mose sot up on a peck-measure and a couple o' overturned buckets in the kerrige-shed, when the Jedge was off on his circuit—Mis' Jinny wif the banjo an' Masta Gahnet wif his mouf-organ and me singin' bass, an' scandalize dem blue-nose No'thern folks, singin' 'S'wanee Ribber' an' 'Dixie'!"

"Dem was great ol' days, Mis' Effel! I mind the afternoon—dat was 'long about Chris'mas—when the Jedge and Mis' Jinny an' Masta Gahnet come drivin' home in the cuttah from the Buthnott Fahm, all wrapped up in the b'ar-skin robes an' the team a li'l sudsy on the flanks an' the air nippy an' the sleighin' good. Mis' Jinny she threw down the reins and I cotch 'em up and say: 'Dat mus' been a gran' ride, Mis' Jinny!' She sot back in the cuttah an' look at the big red sun drappin' behin' the pine trees and she says: 'Mose, I'm *happy*.' Den she sit on the sleigh while I onhitch the team, 'jes dreamin' like. 'Mose,' she says after a while, 'dose preachin' folks talk 'bout a Heben after dis life! But I raikon dis is jes' Heben 'nough for me!'

"'Bout dat time nex' spring we all staht Masta Gahnet off to school. He was a powerful smaht boy. But the Jedge he allowed dat chile weren't over-stiddy wid his book-larnin'. Masta Gahnet was jes' too high-speerited to be shettin' hisself up wif a lot o' books. He was always hankerin' to be out with the hosses, or tryin' to mend up the ol' pea-rifle w'at I kept hid in the harness-room for him, or traipsin' off wid his dawgs, or buildin' a raf' up roun' the



"Dem was great ol' days, Mis' Effell! I mind the afternoon—dat was 'long about Chris'mas—when the Judge and Mis' an' the team a li'l sudry on the flanks an' the air nippy an' the sleighin' good. Mis' Jinny sot back in



Jinny an' Mesta Gahnet come drivin' home in the cuttah from the Buthnott Fahm, all wrapped up in the b'ar-skin robes the cuttah an' look at the big red sun drappin' behin' the pine trees and she says: "Mose, I'm *happy!*"

bend o' the ribber. He saved up an' bought a ol' rabbit-gun for a dollar, a sure-nough gun dat 'd shoot mos' ev'ry time. But the Jedge took dat away from him. Den he swapped a ridin' saddle for a ol' boat. He had her mos' all rigged up for a pirit-ship—an' many's the time dat boy made me cook vittles for all dat pirit-crew o' his'n—an' he was plannin' a pirit-raid on the Lower Ribber Gang b'fore the Jedge even suspicioned he owned dat boat. Lo'dy, I mind the day the Jedge raided dat pirit-ship an' Masta Gahnet an' his brudder pirts all took a high dive off'n the tail end. Dey dove deep an' swum the ribber. The Jedge he went white, yes'm, white as chalk, for dat man never even knowed Masta Gahnet c'd swim a stroke!

"BUT the bigges' trubble come along 'bout the time Masta Gahnet staht to spindle out in the laigs an' took to smokin' cedar-bahk an' char-cane. Nex' thing we knows he's tryin' a puff at t'bacca, scarin' me out'n my wits les' the Jedge ketch him dere in the kerrige-shed an' hol' me 'countable. Masta Gahnet an' the English chu'ch preacher's boy ust to git up on the sunny side o' the stable-roof an' near choke deirselves to deff. Den dey jes' natcher'ly got bruk in to it. Mis' Jinny she did take on bad when she foun' dat out. Masta Gahnet couldn't fool his mammy for long. She jes' *knew* when dere was somethin' in the wind. So she sent for dat boy an' shet herse'f up wif him. An' I mind she promise him a slide trombone and a bicycle on his sixteent' burfday, if he c'd come to her and say he'd never tasted t'bacca from dat day on. An' he meant to do dat, for he come to me and say: 'Mose, heah's dem cubebs and dem odder cig'rettes I bought down to the drug-stoah. Dey'll do you good. I aint a-goin' to smoke no moah!'

"The nex' day Mis' Jinny call me in an' shet the doah and say: 'Mose, dere's nothin' on dis earth nearer an' dearer to me 'n dat boy o' mine. I want for him to be a good boy. I aint a-axin' for you to tittle-tattle on him, for I know you wouldn't, nohow! But I want you for to help me make my boy a good man an' a

hones' man! And if you ever give dat boy a pinch o' t'bacca, I'll *skin* you *alive*!'

"An' I sure would never tittle-tattle on dat boy, for ev'ryone thought a heap o' Masta Gahnet, the same as ev'ryone thought a heap o' Mis' Jinny. He was the kindes' boy you ever see, an' 'specially wif animiles. He had dat red brick fuller'n sick dawgs an' lame dawgs an' no-home dawgs 'n a ant-hill is full o' ants. But I raikon he loved dat houn', ol' Kaiser dere, better 'n all the res'!

"BOUT dat time too he got powerful fond o' the water, slippin' off t' the ribber ev'ry chancet he saw. Many's the time Mis' Jinny sends me scootin' over to the ribber, for to root Masta Gahnet out'n the cave dem rapscallions set a stove up in, where dey set roun' on nail-kaigs eatin' half-cooked cohn and kerriots. Den Masta Gahnet he bought his secon' boat, a ol' duck-boat, and make me tote kerrige-paint down behind the saw-mill, while he do her over an' gaudy her up and put in mos' all his spare time workin' over the leaks. Even Mis' Jinny neber knew 'bout dat boat. Lestaways she neber knew 'bout it till the night Kaiser come whimperin' and scraitchin' at the doah, when the Jedge and Mis' Jinny's been sittin' dere puzzlin' over Masta Gahnet not gittin' home for supper. Den I jes' busts out an' tell dem the truf. An' the Jedge steadies his hand and pats Kaiser and says 'Good dawg!' an' 'Take me to 'im, Kaiser!' An', Lo'dy, from the way he set his face I know he jes' s'mise dat chile is sure drowned. An' when I see Mis' Jinny's face I snuk out'n the house and kneel down behin' the lilack-bushes, wif the rain beatin' on my ol' haid, an' I says: 'Gawd A'mighty, spah dat chile! O Gawd A'mighty, spah dat chile for Mis' Jinny's sake!'

"It was gittin' dahk when we staht out, wif the thunder barkin' like a sheep-dawg at our heels. So we all took lanterns and kerrige-lamps and stahted for the ribber. Mis' Jinny she went by the road, along wif Jo-Anne and the ol' surrey. Kaiser an' the Jedge takes one side o' the ribber, and I takes the other. Oh, Golly, dat was a trip, through bahn-

yards and chicken-yards an' fahm-yards an' grave-yards, wif the Jedge callin' out 'cross the water ev'ry so long, and Kaiser whimperin' and yelpin' and leadin' the Jedge straight to where the ol' duck-boat stood under a big buttonwood. I could see the Jedge hol' his light all over dat boat. An' she sure was empty.

"Den, Lo'dy, I heard something up in the air whisperin' to me! I heard dat voice say 'Mose!' an' all my ol' ha'r jes' unkink itself an' stand up on end. Den I start to aidge away, sayin' 'Mose, you black debbil, if you fix for to run I'll sure brain you wif dis brick!' Den I looks up at the top o' the firin' kiln, and dere I sees Masta Gahnet's haid stickin' over the aidge. Bimeby I understan' dat aint no ghos'. 'For the lub o' Gawd, Masta Gahnet,' I says, 'whad you all doin' on dat kiln-top at dis time o' night?' 'Keepin' wahn,' he says: 'I aint got no clo'es.'

"An' dat was the truf. Dat chile got het up rowin' down the ribber, an' when he come to the ol' Foote Fahm, he jes' natcher'ly peeled off and tuk a swim. An' when ol' Foote's cows come for to swim the fohd, dat chile raikoned he'd ride one o' dem cows acrost. Ol' man Foote gib him the chase, an' stole his clo'es, an' when the rain come on, dat chile jes' natcher'ly had to keep wahn; so he made for the firin' kiln. An' I raikon if he weren't took powerful sick for the nex' week or two the Jedge sure might 've walloped dat boy!

"But I see his mammy come out 'n the Jedge's study wif her eyes all red, and I raikon she begged the Jedge for to spare her boy. You see, Mis' Effel, she jes' *understood* dat boy! Dey was alike inside, bof of 'em was jes' pirootin' an' high-speerited, like all the Pinkneys. The Jedge, he was dif'rent. When Mis' Jinny and her boy knowed the Jedge was goin' to be away for a spell, dey was always carryin' on around dat ol' red brick, rampin' through the house like two chilluns, an' water-fightin' wif the gahden-hose and hoss-racin' down the lane. An' dat boy never had a school-fight or a tech o' skin trubble or a spell o' puppy-love widout his mammy knowin' all about it. An' Masta Gahnet hisself he jes' sprung into a powerful big

boy, wif the Pinkney eyes and the Pinkney laugh and the Pinkney way o' gittin' fun out 'n things. Dat's 'bout the time the trubble stahted!

"DAT trubble didn't staht out 'n nuffin' more 'n a briar-root pipe what Masta Gahnet bought from the Cap'n of a lake schooner unloadin' white pine at the Van Allep lumber yard. It cost him a dollah an' a half—I knowed dat, for he borrowed fohty cents off 'n me—and dat pipe, he 'splained, had been smoked by mos' all the Crowned Huids o' Yurrupe. The Cap'n tol' him dat. Lo'dy, how dat boy loved that pipe. He tol' me he'd nail me down in the cistu'n if I ever breaved a word 'bout him ownin' sech a thing. Why, dat pipe jes' made Masta Gahnet into a *man*. I raikon he owned it four or five weeks b'fore he ever lit her up. But dat was 'bout the fust time he ever fooled his mammy. An' he took to smokin' again.

"I never jes' knowed how the ol' folks foun' out 'bout Masta Gahnet and dat pipe—but I always suspicioned a ol' she-hen what was doin' sewin' for Mis' Jinny by the day. But the Jedge he foun' out 'bout Mis' Jinny's boy smokin'. When he called 'im into dat study, Masta Gahnet was jes' natcher'ly scairt, an' I raikon dat chile didn't tell the truf. An' dat fixed the Jedge.

"Mis' Jinny, I mind, she locked herself up in her baidroom; I was back on the dryin'-green beatin' rugs. Den the Jedge comes to me, hard as iron, and he says: 'Git me a strap!' Lo'dy, I know'd what dat meant. So I goes to the harness-room and unbuckles a check-rein off'n the little mare's harness an' takes it in to the Jedge. He looks at dat baby-strap an' shies it 'cross the room and goes out for to git the strap off 'n the ol' Gladstone neck-yoke. B'fore he can git back, I skips over to the window and opens her wide. 'Oh, Masta Gahnet,' I pled wif dat boy, 'limbah out, limbah out, b'fore you cotch it! I'll take the blame, I sure will!'

"But Mis' Jinny's boy jes' stands dere, wif his ahms folded, an' his Pinkney eyes flashin' an' his face 's white 's the Jedge's. He was a Pinkney, thro' and thro', wif his laigs straight and his

mouf shut—and I jes' crept out to the kerrige-shed and sat down on the ol' surrey-step and blubbered like the ol' fool I was, wif all Masta Gahnet's dawgs creepin' round, whimperin' jes' as if dey knowed something was wrong.

"It was mos' dahk b'fore anybody come near dat shed. When I looks up, I see Masta Gahnet dere. Dat stahted me off again, but dere weren't a teah in dat boy's eye. He'd a bundle o' clo'es an' things what he'd wrapped up in a gunnysack an' tied wif a hame-strap. 'Mose,' he says, 'I'm goin' away!' Den I ax-and ax for him to take me wif him. But he says no, I mus' take keer o' his dawgs for him. Den he staht sayin' good-by to dem dawgs. I couldn't stan' seein' dem dum' animiles lickin' his tremblin' hands and carryin' on that-away, so I clar out. When I git back Masta Gahnet is gone.

"Lo'dy, Lo'dy, dat ol' red brick was a dif'rent house from dat day on, mos' as quiet as a tomb, and Mis' Jinny and the Jedge never sayin' much, and ev'rybody jes' waitin', waitin' for Masta Gahnet to come back. I raikon the Jedge thought for sure dat boy 'd be comin' back 'fore long. But he didn't. And the snow was flyin' and winter come b'fore the ol' folks gave up ever hearin' from him. Den the Jedge he et crow, and stahted the search. But nothin' come of it. Den another winter come. But dey kep' sendin' off letters and watchin' the post. Dey kep' feelin' he'd sure come back. But 'tweren't no use.

"**MIS' JINNY** was took sick, the nex' spring, and the Jedge he done changed a powerful lot. His ha'r done change from salt an' pepper clean into salt, an' he walked to the post ev'ry day jes' like an ol' man. The nex' winter two o' Masta Gahnet's oldes' dawgs up an' died. Den another winter slipped by, an' den still another. Bimeby I raikon Mis' Jinny an' the ol' Jedge done give up. It was powerful dahk and quiet roun' the ol' red brick all dem years.

"I raikon it was the nex' spring after dat, 'bout the middle o' May, dat Mis' Jinny got the fust word 'bout her boy. *Masta Gahnet was comin' home!* He'd

been mos' all over the world, doin' dis and dat, an' den he turned soljer an' 'listed, same as the Pinkney boys did in wah-time. Dat chile 'd been fightin' Spaniards when dey shot 'im thro' the ches'! Yes 'm, him not twenty year ol' an' fightin' in a ahmy! And gittin' shot thro' the ches'! But he was gittin' on fine, the ahmy folks write to the ol' Jedge, tho' dey 'lowed he'd bes' go home and res' up a bit.

"And, Lo'dy, Lo'dy, what goin's on dere was when dose news come to the ol' folks, gittin' the rooms done over, an' slickin' up the gahdens and the green-house, an' paintin' up the ol' surrey, an' cuttin' a new window in the boy's room, so 's he 'd git more sun! I sure did fix for to have ol' Jo-Anne and ol' Dahby shinin' like two-year-ol's, wif blue-ribbon plaited in deir manes, an' all the harness-brass a-shinin', dat day Mis' Jinny's boy come home!

"When dey helped dat boy off'n the train and I see dem thin laigs an' dat white face, I was jes' 'bliged to stoop down and fuss wif ol' Jo-Anne's bellyband, for I sure weren't goin' to make a ol' fool of mysef b'fore all dem folks. But I knowed Mis' Jinny's boy 'd be axin' for me mos' the fust thing. An' he did, sure 'nough. But I jes' helt back, for I knowed he b'long to his mammy and the Jedge 's much as he done to me. An' dat houn' Kaiser he jes' le'p' up and lick dat chile's face and whimper and let the teahs run down his nose an' cry an' shake an' den lick Masta Gahnet's boots. An' when Masta Gahnet hug his mammy, he could on'y use the one ahm, on 'count o' the ches' wound. When he gits in the kerrige and the Jedge tuck him up, he hugs Mis' Jinny ag'in, kind o' hongry-like. Den he laughs an' cries an' fights back the teahs and tetches his mammy's haid and says: 'Oh, Mammy, dere's a white ha'r, an' dere's another, sure as I'm alive!' An' he d'clares he's taller 'n the Jedge hisse'f, and he swears he never see Jo-Anne and Dahby lookin' so gran'. 'Deedy, he do mos' all he can for to cheer the ol' folks up. But somehow it jes' weren't no use. All dat time Mis' Jinny she was jes' 's quiet, like she suspicioned from the fust the truf 'bout dat boy o' hers.



"It was mos' dahk b'fore anybody come near dat shed. When I looks up, I see Masta Gahnet dere. He'd a bundle o' clo'es an' things. 'Mose,' he says, 'I'm goin' away!'"

"You see, Mis' Effel, dat ches' wound done give Masta Gahnet a powerful weak lung. Doctorin' weren't no use, an' nussin' weren't no use. The ahmy folks knowed dat, all 'long. Dat's why dey sent 'im home. He jes' drapped away a li'l, day by day. An' Mis' Jinny she let the ol' Jedge have dat son of his'n most all the time she could spah him, for she raikoned his daddy 'served him more 'n she did. *She* 'd always had 'im. Wif the Jedge it 'd been dif'rent: he didn't understan'—not till after all dem yeahs an' his boy come back again!

"ALL dat spring the ol' Jedge and Masta Gahnet 'd go drivin' out to the ol' Buthnott Fahm, an' bring the kerrige back clean loaded down wif wil'-plum and apple-blossoms. An' 'bout the end o' June Masta Gahnet he passed away. Mos' the las' thing he toldt me, Mis' Effel, was to be sure an' be good to poor ol' Kaiser dere. The Jedge an' Mis' Jinny dey was mos' kind to me dose days—an' dey was hahd days. I was the only one o' the help dat Mis' Jinny 'd 'low to tech any o' Masta Gahnet's things. She kep' his room jes' like it always was, th' ol' slide-trombone over the doah, an' the ol' rabbit-gun in the corner, an' the busted banjo on the she'f jes' as dat boy o' hers lef' 'em. The ol' Jedge he jes' kep' breakin' down ev'ry time he see dose things.

"I never ketch Mis' Jinny, tho', drappin' a teah. She'd jes' sit in dat room by the hour, thinkin' and thinkin'. But in two-three yeahs her ha'r git mos' 's white 's mine. An' when Dahby and Jo-Anne git too ol' for the road, the Jedge he had 'em took out to the Buthnott Fahm an' 'low no one to lay a han' on dem hosses. Dey jes' lazy roun' dere an' live on the fat o' the lan', dat team, an' 'bout once a mont' Mis' Jinny 'd drive out an' whussle at the pasture-gate and dat team 'd come trottin' up and eat a apple out 'n her han' and rub deir noses again' her knees. But bimeby deir teef got bad an' deir joints got stiff. A hahd winter come on, an' one day Lige, the fahm man, he calls me out behin' the granary and 'lows dem hosses is in mis'ry an' is sure got 'o be shot.

"When the roads dry up again wif

spring, an' Mis' Jinny an' the Jedge git drivin' out to the Buthnott Fahm again, Lige an' me we keep lyin' like troopers and sayin' the ol' team is back in the bush—yes 'm, 'way back in the bush and fat 's butter! Den one day bimeby Mis' Jinny she's jes' set on seein' dat team, an' me and the fahm man we 's jes' natcher'ly 'bliged to tail what happened.

"Lo'dy, Lo'dy, but poor Mis' Jinny did sob and cry 'bout dat ol' team. 'Dey's all dat's lef'! All dat's lef'!' she say to me when she wipe her eyes. B'fore we gits home she says to me, she says, 'Mose, never you tail the Jedge 'bout Dahby and Jo-Anne bein' gone! Never, mind you, nohow!'

"But b'fore the nex' mont' slip away the Jedge he ax for dat team hisse'f. When me and Lige shows 'im where dey 's buried, back in the bush, he stays out dere all by hisse'f, mos' all mornin'. When he gits back, he up an' says to me, 'Mose, mind you never let poor Mis' Jinny know what happen to dat team—never, nohow!'

"An' when the ol' Jedge died the nex' winter, Mis' Jinny she says to me, 'Mose, dere's jes' you and me an' ol' Kaiser lef'!' An' the next spring she stahted goin' downhill herse'f, goin' fast. One day she set up in baid an' sen' for Kaiser an' me and say, 'Mose, d' you all raikon you c'd string dat ol' banjo o' Masta Gahnet's?' An' I gits the ol' banjo an' strang 'im; an' Mis' Jinny say, 'Give us Dixie, Mose!' But Lo'dy, I's sech a ol' fool I bruk down an' cry like a baby, an' Mis' Jinny kep' sayin', 'Poor ol' Mose! Poor ol' Mose!'—jes' like dat.

"Den the young doctah come in and shak' his haid an' say niggers and houn'-dawgs weren't no good for the sick. An' Mis' Jinny she turn herse'f roun' an' light into dat young doctah and tol' him if any blue-nose No'thern trash lay a han' on dat dawg or tech dat ol' nigger *she'd sure skin 'em alive!* An' 'bout the las' thing she says to me is, 'Mose, I aint a-goin' to ax you to be good to dat ol' dawg. He was Masta Gahnet's dawg. I knows dat's enough!'. . . . And dat's the same dawg dere, Mis' Effel, dat ol' Kaiser. And Lo'dy, the man dat talks 'bout shootin' Kaiser 's sure got to shoot ol' Mose fust! Yais, indeedy!"

Millicent was firm that Mrs. Lane should take that or nothing.



Daughter Millicent

MILLICENT was no fool. "That's the trouble," wailed her mother. "I could manage just a plain fool girl!"

By Ida M. Evans

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

THOMAS HAUXLEY, salesman of the Kopper Wholesale Millinery House, elevated his scant, graying eyebrows into interrogating arches, over the order from Mrs. Amanda Steemson, which came in the morning mail. He read it again and again and again. By the third reading, a perplexed filigree of wrinkles reached from his wide forehead quite over the top of his bald head.

In the twenty years or more that he had been representing the Kopper House in Northern Ohio, he had often got longer orders from Mrs. Steemson, and he had often got bigger orders from her. But he had never got an order like this. Her town was small; and though an adjacent countryside gave her a large trade, it was, to phrase it mildly, a con-

servative trade. Medium-priced felts, mostly brown, navy blue and black, cotton velvet of the same useful shades, and ostrich plumes at four dollars a dozen, loomed largely in Mrs. Steemson's orders.

He read those pages again. Well, he hadn't seen the place for seven months. An attack of appendicitis had kept him in the city the last season, and another man had gone over his territory. Maybe, in seven months, that small town had changed vastly. Maybe it had struck oil or a radium bed. Or maybe some firm making popular-priced automobiles had moved the factory there. Still perplexedly eying the order, Hauxley called across the intervening desks to Mossel, the Nebraska man:

"Say, Mossel! Didn't you motor



Three of the younger salesmen and one of the older edged swiftly over to inquire courteously what the young woman might wish.

through Ellville, Ohio, during your vacation last month?"

Mossel was busy with his own mail. "Ye-eh,"—abstractedly.

"What kind of a town is it?" earnestly asked Hauxley.

Mossel looked around in surprise. "Aint it in your territory?"

"I haven't seen it for seven months. Would you say it has changed much in that time?"

"Say, whatcha driving at?" Mossel wanted to know in disgust. "Say, that town hasn't changed since Washington crossed the Delaware. I run out of gasoline and had to stay all night in the ten-by-twenty-yard dump. Say, in Ellville, they still pay the preacher in garden truck."

Hauxley re-wrinkled his forehead over the order. "What would you say the town needed?" he asked.

"Huh?" Mossel laid his mail down.

"Well, first, it needs gasoline. I could find only six quarts. And the only hotel needs a new roller-towel and a dining-room. The public square needs new hitching-posts. I guess the Indians that used to roam the State left what's there now. The horse-trough in that square needs a new bottom. There aint any roads through the town—just bumps. The sides of the streets need sidewalks; the inhabitants need Gabriel's horn,"—disgustedly. "I can mention more—"

"Would you judge Ellville to be a suitable destination?"—Hauxley referred to the order in his hand—"for: One gross best imported French silver moss roses; one dozen moiré straw importations, colors old rose, ciel, amethyst, etc.; one dozen large Birds of Paradise, natural; a quantity of Goura—quite a

quantity; a large order of our best—our best, mind!—silk velvet—”

Mossel looked eloquently at Hauxley, and got back to his own order-reading. “Would I judge the northern part of Greenland a good place to plant palms and magnolias?” he demanded. “Quit your kidding.”

Hauxley re-read the order. It was a tasteful list of the makings of elegant headgear. Had it been sent in by a modish shop on Michigan Avenue that was patronized by, say, the members of the “Passing Show of 1915,” or by the feminine relatives of a beef baron, Hauxley would have tossed it over to be filled, and thought no more of it. But from Ellville! Oh well, there was a mistake. He guessed he’d better substitute—

Still, he guessed he’d better not. It had come on Mrs. Steemson’s own letter-head. She was a spunky lady, with a well-sinewed mind of her own, as many salesmen had learned to their disgruntlement. A few times, in years past, Hauxley—and others—had ventured innocent little substitutions, such as mauve mull for purple, or scratch felt for smooth. And, every time, that substitution came flying back, express collect, with a crabbed notice from Mrs. Steemson that she knew what she wanted and that nothing else was to be sent instead. If the house was out of the article ordered, there were other houses.

Hauxley called a stock boy—then, doubtfully, kept him waiting. Good heavens! What would that woman do with nine-dollar-a-yard faille in Ellville? She’d have to give it away! Maybe she was losing her mind. Come to think, she had looked fretted, or harassed, the last time she was in. And once she had jumped nervously, merely because a pretty, shrill-voiced salesgirl darted in front of her. Maybe her brain was weakening, as it sometimes does at the approach of old age. Pshaw, though! she wasn’t more than forty-eight or so. He told the boy to fill the order.

It was shipped, by express, as requested. Ellville was a day and a half by express from Chicago. A day and a half later, Hauxley got a telegram from Mrs. Steemson:

Am returning imbecile shipment.
Letter following.

“I knew it!” Hauxley communed with himself.

The next morning he got the letter. It was short but caustic. It bitterly informed him that he had been on the road long enough to have a teaspoonful of sense. Even though he had been born without judgment, he might have picked up a little. To send such stuff to her—when not a soul in Ellville could tell Goura at thirty dollars a tuft from common Plymouth Rock moultings! Every curve of the cramped, somewhat old-fashioned handwriting seemed swollen with irascibility.

Hauxley got red and nearly tore the letter up before reading it half through. He was getting to be an old man, and he had nervous dyspepsia—and darned if he had to take such abuse from any customer on earth, no matter if he lost his job!

Purely from indignation, he finished reading it, and found the postscript:

I was busy, and my daughter Millicent, who is home from boarding-school, made out that order. But you needn’t have sent it.

“How should I know?” irately reflected Hauxley. But somehow he got the impression that the cramped letters of the postscript had dejected curves.

A WEEK later, Mrs. Steemson came in. She was a spare, middle-aged woman, brisk of tongue and gait and brain, with determined lips and black eyes that were as sharp as jet arrows. Partly from her own mouth, partly from observation, Hauxley knew that she had had to pay the living and the funeral expenses of a worthless husband, and support four or five children, whom, at intervals during the years, Hauxley had glimpsed about the store. She had begun business with seven dollars’ worth of cotton flowers and twenty or less straw shapes; and while her trade was strictly medium class, it had developed into something by no means to be despised by wholesale houses. The Kopper House at present was thankful for her

orders and quite willing to grant her extensive credit—a fact of which she took no advantage, being cold-bloodedly partial to cash discounts. Even in her less prosperous days, Hauxley, or anyone else, had never considered her a person in need of sympathy. She was too firm-minded.

Now he became aware at once that there was a change in her. She dejectedly apologized for the letter, which mightily surprised him. Then, as though she had to tell her troubles to some one, she dejectedly unfolded a condition of affairs that, at the time, did not strike Hauxley as being very troublous—merely that her daughter Millicent was home and persisted in assisting her long-working and overworked mother in running a business that had done very well in the past without assistance. He gathered that the young woman fitted into the business like a frisky colt in a tinware shop.

Seeing that something in the way of sympathetic comment was expected from him as an old friend, Hauxley remarked that he never went much on boarding-schools, anyway.

"Oh, I don't regret sending her there," said Mrs. Steemson quickly. "It gave me three years—without her. But now she's home, for good." She said it in the same melancholy tone in which she might have announced the arrival of infantile paralysis in her family.

"Oh, well, she'll likely get married," solaced Hauxley. "How old is she?"

"Nineteen. But she won't likely get married," — shortly. "She says," — Mrs. Steemson swallowed hard, — "she says she doesn't intend to marry. Says she's going to stay right with me and be a — a help."

"Lots of girls say the same thing," — skeptically.

"I aint counting on her ever marrying," — discouragedly.

Hauxley was troubled. He visioned Millicent — spare, long-featured like her mother, spunky-voiced.

"And I just can't afford to let her make a mess of my business—

morosely. "There's the younger children to educate yet, and my own old age to consider."

"Certainly," agreed Hauxley.

"You see, I've been handling hats so long that I know just what everyone in Ellville wants," she went on. "And I get it for everyone, and there's seldom any friction. And, if I do say it myself, I've been fairly successful. You've got to agree in that."

Hauxley nodded emphatic assent.

"But Millicent —" Mrs. Steemson paused to sigh dolefully. "The other noon, Nelly Cole; the ten-year-old daughter of the butcher, came in for a school hat. Her mother always lets her come alone, because she knows I'll let her choose something pretty and durable. But I was out; and Millicent sold the child a pale rose chif—



"Now mind, I depend on you not to sell me anything I don't want."

fon poke. Nelly wore it right to school from the store. And it rained that afternoon, and ruined it. Of course I told Mrs. Cole that she needn't pay for it. But she's touchy, and she said, snappy-like, that she wasn't an object of charity. So she paid me—and sent over

to the next town, where her sister lives, and got Nelly another school hat."

"Too bad," said Hauxley. "But surely if you are firm—"

Mrs. Steemson quivered. "It's her that's firm,"—bitterly. "I happened to be out, too, when old Mrs. Lane came in. I've sold her for fifteen years. She's rich, but in winter she always wears a small, neat, inexpensive black velvet hat, with maybe a touch of gold lace or a small plume, and always in summer a small, neat, black chip with maybe a mauve rose or a tiny bunch of lilies. I always have ready just what she wants. But Millicent"—dispiritedly—"fixed up a chirky purple lace sailor, with two long, glittering, insane orchid sprays that I was saving for the woman that owns the hotel. Millicent was firm that Mrs. Lane should take that or nothing. So Mrs. Lane got mad—I don't wonder!—and got a mail-order catalogue, and sent away for her hat." Mrs. Steemson's sigh was very like a sob. "I hate to lose a customer to the mail-order houses!"

"Well, I should say so," exclaimed Hauxley with fervid sympathy. Mail-order houses were a nauseous topic at Kopper's. "But can't you—"

"I can't do a blamed thing unless I turn her out of home," snapped Mrs. Steemson with her old-time spunk. "And you know that would be heartless! Give me six dozen dark gray and brown blackbird wings, quick. And if Millicent writes in for imported snowy pheasants, mind you write back you're out of 'em. And then,"—helplessly,— "she'll likely write to another house. She says if I'd quit your old foggy place, and tear out the front of the store and put in French plate-glass windows, like they have here in the city, she'd be happier."

Hauxley recalled the faded red-and-green-sided lumber wagons that banked Ellville's square, the disconsolate square itself, the staid folks who clambered out of those wagons. "Oh, say! The girl is a fo-o—I beg your pardon," he mumbled with a red face.

But the mother was not offended. "No, she aint,"—grimly. "That's the worst of it. I could manage just a plain fool girl."

FOR a month, Hauxley sincerely and industriously pitied Mrs. Steemson, forgiving many acrid tilts of the past. He wished that he could do something to help her out. But he was sure that in time her own strength of character would enable her to deal properly with the high-idea-ed young woman.

At the end of the month, Mrs. Steemson again visited the wholesale house, and she was accompanied by her daughter.

"She insisted on coming," gloomily confided Mrs. Steemson.

Hauxley gaped, and repented of that wasted sympathy. He felt resentfully that Mrs. Steemson had hoaxed him. Certainly he had been led to picture this girl as distinctly unbeautiful. Certainly Mrs. Steemson had implied that she was unprepossessing, to say the least.

And instead, she was as good to look at as a shell-pink gladiola. She was tall and lithe and slimly rounded. At once Hauxley thought of several ladies whom he had known well in his college days, though the gray of intervening years had veiled them from his thoughts—Venus, Hebe, Aphrodite, Helen of Troy and others of that crowd.

She had a round, lovely chin, round, lovely pink cheeks, and eyes of an exquisitely clear deep blue that Hauxley, though getting old and having traveled much, had never seen equaled. Her hair was neither blond nor brown, but a light corn-silky cross between. She was charmingly dressed in a chic, tailored white flannel coat and skirt, such as Florida land ad's use extensively in pictorial enticements. It is excellent garnishment, that clean, tailored white cloth, for perfect profiles, clear deep blue of iris, and land advertisements.

Having gaped for several moments, Hauxley looked oddly, one might say, accusingly, at Mrs. Steemson, who stood by. Three of the younger salesmen and one older edged swiftly over to inquire courteously what the tailored-white-clothed young woman might wish.

Mrs. Steemson remarked the swiftly-edging-near salesmen and then returned Hauxley's odd look with a faint wry smile. The smile irritated and perplexed Hauxley.

"Did I understand you to say,"—with sarcasm—"that you feared this young lady would be always with you?" asked Hauxley.

"She's pretty, isn't she?" returned Mrs. Steemson, eying her daughter with what seemed reluctant pride—eying as much of her as she could glimpse through the screen of sack coats.

"I don't think she'll be on your hands long," said Hauxley, drily.

"Don't you?" Mrs. Steemson's tone equaled his in dryness. "I hope you're right. Not that I don't love Milly,"—hastily. "I do, dearly. It'd break my heart if she'd die. But—I'd enjoy seeing her married to a good, steady, well-to-do chap."

"If I were young, you'd soon see it," assured Hauxley, amusedly watching two more salesmen side over.

"Would I?"—peculiarly. "Well, every man in Ellville shined up to Milly as soon as she got home, like a small boy to a Christmas tree. And every one"—with gloom—"has shied away from her like a boy from a wasp's nest."

Hauxley smiled with incredulity.

Mrs. Steemson smiled with bitterness, and continued: "Herb McCoy, son of our best druggist, is a nice boy, clean, been to college, and now is doing well as his father's partner. He was wild after Milly, got red when he saw her on the street, and wrote her a letter every day. And she liked him well enough. But it was hinted that a cough syrup put out by his father held an opiate. Milly wrote in to the State Board. It was investigated, and it proved harmless on analysis. But Herb and his father wont speak to Milly. There was a lot of talk."

Hauxley smiled with amusement.

Mrs. Steemson went on: "And Tommy Grall, of the rich Gralls, came flying down in his big touring car the minute he heard she was home. Tommy is a nice boy. He has always had too much money and never had to work, but he's decent. And Milly said she liked him pretty well. But he squints a little—though you'd never notice it unless some one called your attention. Millicent wouldn't run the risk of having cross-eyed children. In my days,"—

severely,—“young girls were more particular how they talked! And Milly has a shrill voice,—you'll notice,—and she told him as she was getting out of his car one night. Some one around the corner heard her, and poor Tommy was gayed so that he left town. He sent back word that he wouldn't marry her if he was left alone on a desert island with her."

Hauxley inferred that perhaps a larger field than Ellville might be more suited to the girl.

Mrs. Steemson smiled again, bitterly. "I guess people are about the same kind, whether the town is big or little," she said. "A drummer—"

But Millicent, smiling prettily, was detaching herself from the group of anxious-to-serve salesmen. "Did you say the silks, first, Mamma?" she asked.

Mrs. Steemson clutched Hauxley's arm and furtively, frantically, appealed in whisper, "Now mind, I depend on you not to sell me anything I don't want!"

It hardly seemed credible to Hauxley—such humble appeal from the keen, spunky buyer that he had known so long! "Leave it to me," he assured her, mentally deciding that she was about in the state where she needed a daughter's assistance. Then he smiled down at the pretty girl, face upturned to his. It was a bland, paternal, easy smile. He guessed a wary old hat-huckster like himself was a match for a pretty, small-town doll. Funny, though, how parents always over- or under-estimated their children!

The bland, easy, paternal smile endured through several departments. Tactfully Hauxley evaded selling Miss Steemson some wire-frame monstrosities that Ellville had not been educated up to and never would be. Pleasantly he could not find the satin tapestry novelties that Ellville could not buy without mortgaging the square. Amiably he avoided searching for the imported gold plush that he was aware would be no more effective in Ellville than wicker porch furniture in a bayou. A tinge of mirth came over that indulgent smile as he saw the pink of the pretty cheeks angrily deepen to red, the pretty lips



"Very pretty," conceded Millicent, "but not imported. While I was at school in the East, I visited the establishment where this very material is manufactured. The foreman laughingly informed me how much of it is palmed off as imported." Her pretty finger rested on a very American name stamped on the edge.

compress. Then those lips parted to say:

"Mamma, don't you think we'd better get another salesman—one who knows the stock—youngeer, more alert?"

"Eh?" Hauxley lost his smile. Millicent looked him over. In her slighting eyes, Hauxley saw himself old, doddering, fat, a bit slovenly, ready to be shelved.

"Mr. Hauxley *always* waits on me," nervously informed Mrs. Steemson. She sent him a furtive, appealing glance, which Hauxley returned with a glare.

"Ah!" exclaimed Millicent. "That explains—much."

Hauxley felt a streak of heat around the back of his neck, just at the top of his collar. The insolent little—

"What is the matter?" came a courteous voice.

Hauxley turned to James Kopper, a pleasant, pompous, old-young man of forty, whom the employees of the Kopper House respected greatly but had never brought themselves to love. He had a prying way in the matter of expense accounts and unlanded sales, which his father before him had been too genial to possess.

"Nothing at all," Hauxley said, shortly.

"This gentleman can't find any gold plush for us," said Millicent with hauteur.

"It—it doesn't matter," protested Mrs. Steemson.

"It does," protested Miss Steemson.

"Certainly it does," declared Mr. Kopper, annoyed. He scowled at Hauxley, behind and above whose head, on the sixth shelf, stood in plain view a tawny

slab of the desired fabric. Mr. Kopper bounced behind the counter, beaming on Millicent and browbeating Hauxley with the same facial contortion. He leaped up nimbly and flung down the tawny, luscious-piled mass.

"Our latest importation,"—importantly, shoving Hauxley aside rebukingly. The heat-wave on the back of Hauxley's neck rose in temperature.

Millicent drew a pretty, appraising finger across the gaudy billow.

"Just received from Lyons," further eulogized Kopper.

"Very pretty," conceded Millicent, "but not imported. While I was at school in the East, I visited the establishment where this very material is manufactured. The foreman laughingly informed me how much of it is palmed off as imported." Her pretty finger rested on a very American name stamped on the edge.

Thomas Hauxley was not a spiteful man. But he glowed with delight at the distinct warm wave of red that crept around Mr. Kopper's neck just under the top of his collar.

AT the close of the day, Hauxley had a long, high-totaling order, and he was physically exhausted. Millicent Steemson was coldly triumphant. Mrs. Steemson was dejected.

In a melancholy whisper, she reproached Hauxley. "I depended on you," she said.

"How could I help it?" Hauxley demanded with heat, weary heat.

"I know it," she forlornly agreed. "I do wish"—with a sigh of utter misery—"she'd marry some good, well-to-do man."



Hauxley talked to her like a father.

Other similar days followed. Mrs. Steemson grew more dejected every time that Hauxley saw her. He grew to hate her pretty, self-poised daughter, with an unholy hatred. His ears ached from such dialogue as:

"Milly, I know what I want,"—plainly.

"But, Mamma, you don't know what you ought to want."

Or:

"Milly, the folks at Ellville don't like these real late styles. We've still got those—"

"But, Mamma,"—decisively, — "you should educate them to like them."

There was small firmness left in Mrs. Steemson, merely a worn-out, discouraged echo of the former firmness that Hauxley and others had bowed to for twenty years.

She put up a show of fight when Millicent delved into wide, high-priced, glittering gauze, as frail as it was high-priced. "Milly, that'll stay on our shelves till kingdom come! Folks won't pay high for anything that won't stand rain, let alone night air."

"Mamma," said Milly, "the other day Mrs. Glide left the store without making a purchase because we had none."

"I wouldn't have sold her any if we'd a carload," said Mrs. Steemson. "She's owed me eleven dollars for nine years, and she gets her hats from a sister in New York."

"That isn't the point, Mamma,"—patiently. "It's the principle of the thing. We ought to have what people want."

"I've noticed that them that can't pay always want more and better stuff than them that can,"—testily.

But the gauze was added to the order.

Kopper congratulated Hauxley on the increased sales to the customer at Ellville. Hauxley mumbled something that it was as well his employer did not catch.

Mrs. Steemson gloomily confided at one trip that she thought there ought to be a law protecting parents from too-capable children.

Hauxley agreed, and set out to do his best to rid her of her daughter. He essayed Mossel, who was a fairly comely, single man.

"Naw!" said Mossel. "I've got a nice little girl out on the South Side. And while her nose is a bit large, and her complexion is several points from peaches, she don't make me feel like I've run full-tilt into a pretty porcupine."

And Mossel added unkindly: "You aint married. Why don't you grab her yourself?"

"The Lord forbid," involuntarily cried Hauxley, and said with belated dignity, "I'm an old man."

"What are you fussing over the matter for, anyway?"—carelessly.

Hauxley explained that he couldn't help it, with Mrs. Steemson's doleful appeals, both oral and epistolary, spoiling his peace of mind.

And he praised Millicent insinuatingly to a young factory inspector with whom he had seen her chatting once or twice. The inspector was of excellent family, he ascertained, had excellent shoulders and political connections of such excellence as to insure his nearly always having a job. For Mrs. Steemson's sake, he didn't care to foist a no-account on the girl, though, even so, the no-account would have received his pity.



"How dare you!" cried Miss Steemson.

But the factory inspector was disdainful. "Yes, I know who you mean," he said. "Yes—she's good looking. Yes—she's a queen. But,"—bitterly,— "you got an errand boy here who is thirteen years and ten months old. I know his folks. There's a pack of kids. His dad's got consumption. His mother is sickly, and scrubs. I figured the kid was as well off up here as chasing the streets. So—I don't see him when he gets in my way. See? But this know-it-all, manage-it-all young woman comes nosing around, and reports me for not reporting him! You know what that means, I suppose. If you don't, I don't mind telling you that, in spite of all the influence I'm supposed to have, I'm holding my job now by the skin of my teeth."

After another snub from a young salesman who refused to give the reason, Hauxley gave up, as far as helping Mrs. Steemson was concerned. He could do nothing.

IT came quite as soon as he expected—a dejected request from Mrs. Steemson for thirty days' time. And he knew, as well as if a film were unrolling before him, that the shelves of her store were top-heavy with unsold and unsalable goods.

Of course, it really was not his business, but Hauxley could not have been grumpier, for a week, had it been his own.

He was still grumpy when Millicent breezed in the next week, pretty, poised, prepared to buy—oh, a lot of stuff!—with a pretty, though rather shrill, laugh.

Hauxley looked at her. That last dejected letter still lay on his desk. She mouthed carelessly: "Some embroidered white chiffon, please. And white messaline—your best. And that double-faced imported white charmeuse—the dead white. And—let's see." She murmured through a scribbled list: "Street hats first, I guess. Then traveling hats, matinee, afternoon reception, shopping—I do hope,"—sharply—"you have a better assortment of picture hats than last time."

Hauxley looked at her. And Ellville held that two hats were more than plenty

for any woman—one for church and other dressy occasions, one for the back yard and other undressy places!

Then he unloosed, and he talked to her like a father, like a wild, angry, completely-out-of-patience, nearly-apoplectic father to a bad, reckless, ungrateful, unforgivable daughter. He talked to her, as the inimitable Watterson used to talk to Republicans in his most adjectival days; as Kopper sometimes talked to him; as pedestrians talk to chauffeurs; as union men talk to scabs. He told her that from the top of her head to the soles of her feet she was silly, selfish, stubborn. He ran out of breath, paused, collected some, and took up the tale again. He finished with the warm wish that she were his small son, and there were a woodshed near.

"How dare you!" cried Miss Steemson at the close, and stamped away.

Hauxley smiled happily to himself at the wrathful *stamp-stamp* of her chic heels. Then he clasped his hands over his abdomen, and leaned lazily back in his chair, with the pleasing consciousness of a duty well done.

He was still comfortably leaning when Mossel passed.

"I see your pretty little Miss Steemson is over in the Chiffons buying all the white hand-embroidered in stock for her wedding dress."

"Wedding dress?"

"Yeh. Haven't you heard that she is engaged to Kopper? Been engaged nearly a month, but they kept it quiet. Kopper,"—in disgust,— "seems infatuated. Says he fell in love with her the day she cleverly called his bluff on some imported plush. Says he never imagined a pretty woman could be so clever—whatcha doing?"

Hauxley's folded hands had unfolded. And his lower jaw had dropped.

"Me?" he inquired vacantly. "Oh, I'm cleaning out my desk."

IT is depressing work, cleaning out pigeon-holes that one has used for twenty years. Hauxley, in the days that followed, pitied himself more than once. Certainly, he could find another desk—and speedily, with a sales record like his! Well, he guessed so!

But he was getting to be old. And when you are getting to be old, changes are hard to make, in friends, or politics, or jobs, or bedroom slippers. And he had nervous indigestion. And—in what pigeon-hole were those digestion tablets?

He was disgustedly rummaging for them when Mrs. Steemson came in, no longer dejected, nor depressed, nor spunky, nor harassed-looking, but vastly pleased.

"I knew I could depend on you," she said gratefully.

"Me?"—puzzled.

It finally dawned upon him that she had the erroneous idea that he was in some way responsible for her daughter's captivity of Kopper—or, rather, Kopper's captivity of her daughter. He tried to undeceive her, but she wouldn't be undeceived.

"I knew you'd get her off my hands,"—thankfully. "Not"—in haste—"that Millicent isn't a dear, sweet girl, and I'll miss her terribly. You know I love Millicent. But—"

"Of course," agreed Hauxley with a grin. It was a thoughtful grin, and he had forgotten digestion tablets and Millicent in puzzled inspection of Millicent's mother. That vastly pleased ex-

pression gave her an unexpected youthfulness.

Now, when Mrs. Steemson had been a hard-working, spunky woman, Hauxley had—well, not disliked her. When she had been dejected, he had lain awake nights sympathizing with her. And now that she was no longer spunky nor dejected, but perkily happy, Hauxley suddenly realized that no other customer on his list could have drawn so deeply on his stock of sympathy. Nervous digestion and lonesomeness give a person about the same depressed feeling. He realized just how lonesome he had been, and how well Mrs. Steemson could cure him of that feeling.

And in turn Mrs. Steemson acknowledged, with a blush as young as any Millicent could produce, that it would be a great relief if Hauxley would take over the management of all her affairs. And she added regretfully, "Maybe if you'd had charge of Millicent when she was growing up—"

"The Lord forbid!" ejaculated Hauxley, and went on cleaning out his desk.

But all his depression had disappeared. He really appeared several years younger as he smiled up at the future Mrs. Hauxley.

The First Laugh—And The Last

FRED A. GROSS, that seriously humorous city detective, whose letters on home-building and life in the suburbs have been set down so vividly by Ring W. Lardner, has given a party. It was inspired by a desire to make some of his neighbors jealous. A big time was had by all. Don't fail to read of it, in the pace-setting July issue of THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE, on the news-stands June 23rd. Consider some of the features of that issue:

"The Last Laugh," - - - by Ring W. Lardner
 "The Fifth Choice of Mr. Pollerson," by Ida M. Evans
 "The Mystery of Chance," by Melville Davisson Post
 "Henry," - - - - by Ellis Parker Butler

AND STORIES BY

Albert Payson Terhune; Justin Huntly McCarthy; that new writer, Ray Sprigle; and a dozen or more others.

WATCH FOR THE JULY RED BOOK ON THE NEWS-STANDS JUNE 23RD.

A Complete Résumé of the Opening Chapters of Mrs. Ward's New Novel

MRS. HUMPHRY WARD, who probably knows more geniuses than any other living woman, gives in this, her latest novel, the other side: the side of the wife of the genius, who is expected smilingly to await her lord in some unobtrusive corner while women, who, he feels, "understand" him, lionize and pet him.

Arthur Meadows is a writer of expensive tastes and small income who for years has spent twice as much as he made, and done it with enjoyment, while his wife Doris has stood off debts by selling her drawings and waited on him. Suddenly he begins to succeed and becomes noticed by Lady Dunstable, an Englishwoman of position and important connections.

Lady Dunstable is a "man's woman." She simply tolerates or wholly ignores the wives of the men she wants to admit to her circle.

She invites Meadows and his wife to spend the week-end at her country place, Crosby Ledgers, but the invitation is so worded that Doris may easily refrain from accepting without displeasing her hostess. She wants to refuse, but Meadows takes the high ground that he does not wish to accept invitations without his wife. So Doris "does up" her well worn clothes, takes her housemaid as personal maid to save appearances—and finds that as usual the genius forgets to notice how his wife fares when he is under the magic of Lady Dunstable's company.

THE first day, at tea, Meadows is singled out by Lady Dunstable's conversation while Doris is left out. After tea Lady Dunstable tells Doris in a way that makes it a command that she will want to rest till dinner in her room. So, during the hours Doris is miserably lonely and hot in her room, Lady Dunstable takes Meadows to walk about her beautiful place.

While Lady Dunstable is thus engaged in trying to make an impression on Meadows, one of her poor relatives, who

lives at Crosby Ledgers, visits Doris and tells her not to be surprised at anything Lady Dunstable does, as she always has her own way. Doris' visitor also informs her that Lady Dunstable has monstrously cruel manners toward people who displease her. She relates how the great lady, in search of interest, one day invited a near-by curate's daughter to stop with her. After bringing the frightened girl halfway to Crosby Ledgers, Lady Dunstable suddenly decided she wasn't interesting after all, turned about and took the insulted girl home. She also tells Doris that one reason for Lady Dunstable's constant demand for interest and excitement is because her twenty-two-year-old son is a failure.

DORIS decides to fight back. She is well educated, easy in manner and attractive although not beautiful. But at every turn she finds herself worsted as only man-loving hostesses know how to worst wives of their men guests who are in the way. And worse, she cannot keep her dismay from her husband, who thinks she is only critical and disagreeable. This last worries Doris because she really is a cheerful and pleasing personality. But try as she will to oust it, disquiet has entered her life and destroyed her peace.

Through the visit Lady Dunstable constantly makes Meadows the lion, and Doris is pushed into a corner. Doris protests to Meadows, but he tells her it's only her ill humor and lack of wisdom in seeing how the attention of Lady Dunstable and her friends is making him a famous man. Doris droops and when they return home, spends more and more time on her drawings.

Then comes an invitation from Lady Dunstable to the Meadowses to visit her at her Scotland place for three weeks at the end of the season. Of course Meadows decides to go. And Doris is sick at the idea of going to what she knows would be constant misery—and equally sick at the thought of letting Meadows go alone.



Lady Dunstable

A Great Success

*The story of the wife of a genius,
told in a brilliant new novel.*

By Mrs. Humphry Ward

Author of "The Marriage of William Ashe," etc.

I L L U S T R A T E D B Y C . H . T A F F S

CHAPTER 'III

DURING the weeks that followed the Meadows' first visit to Crosby Ledgers, Doris' conscience was by no means asleep on the subject of Lady Dunstable. She felt that her behavior in that lady's house, and the sudden growth in her own mind of a quite unmanageable dislike, were not to be defended in one who prided herself on a general temper of coolness and common sense, who despised the rancor and whims of other women, hated scenes, and always had held jealousy to be the smallest and most degrading of passions. Why not laugh at what was odious, show oneself superior to personal slights, and enjoy what could be enjoyed? And above all, why grudge Arthur a woman friend?

However, none of these arguments availed at all to reconcile Doris to the new intimacy growing under her eyes. The Dunstables came to town, and invitations followed. Mr. and Mrs. Meadows were asked to a large dinner-party. Doris held her peace and went. She

found herself at the end of a long table, with an inarticulate schoolboy of seventeen—a ward of Lord Dunstable's—on her left, and on her right an elderly Colonel who, after a cool examination of her through an eyeglass, decided to devote himself to the débutante on his other side—a Lady Rosamond, who was ready to chatter hunting and horses to him through the whole dinner. The girl was not pretty, but she was fresh and gay, and Doris, tired with "much serving," envied her spirits, her evident assumption that the world only existed for her to laugh and ride in, her childish unspoken claim to the best of everything—clothes, food, amusements, lovers.

Doris made valiant efforts with the schoolboy. She liked boys and prided herself on getting on with them. But this specimen had no conversation—at any rate for the female sex—and apparently only an appetite. He ate steadily through the dinner and seemed rather to resent Doris' attempts to distract him from the task. So presently Doris found herself reduced to long tracts of silence, when her fan was

her only companion, and the watching of other people her only amusement.

LORD and Lady Dunstable faced each other at the sides of the table, which was purposely narrow, so that talk could pass across it. Lady Dunstable sat between an ambassador and a Cabinet minister, but Meadows was almost directly opposite to her, and it seemed to be her chief business to make him the hero of the occasion. It was she who drew him into political or literary discussion with the Cabinet minister—so that the neighbors of each stayed their own talk to listen; she who would insist on his repeating "that story you told me at Crosby Ledgers;" who attacked him abruptly—rudely even, as she had done in the country—so that he might defend himself; and who, when he had slipped into all her traps one after another, would fall back in her chair with a little satisfied smile. Doris, silent and forgotten, could not keep her eyes for long from the two distant figures—from this new Arthur and the sallow-faced, dark-eyed witch who had waved her wand over him.

Wasn't she glad to see her husband courted, valued as he deserved, borne along the growing stream of fame? What matter, if she could only watch him from the bank? And if the impetuous stream were carrying him away from her? No! She wasn't glad. Some cold and deadly thing seemed to be twining about her heart. Were they leaving the dear, poverty-stricken, debt-pestered life behind forever? In it, after all, they had been so happy, she everything to Arthur, and he so dependent upon her. No doubt she had been driven to despair, often, by his careless, shiftless ways; she had thirsted for success and money—just money enough, at least, to get along with. And now success had come, and money was coming. And here she was,



At a concert, for which she had herself sent them tickets, Lady Pitlochry," she said, smiling to

longing for the old, hard, struggling past—hating the advent of the new and glittering future.

As she sat at Lady Dunstable's table, Doris seemed to see the little room in their Kensington house, with the big hole in the carpet, the piles of papers and books, the reading-lamp that would smoke, her work-basket, the house-books, Arthur contentedly pulling at his pipe, the fire crackling between them, his shabby coat, her shabby dress.

Bliss! compared to this splendid scene,



Dunstable met Doris and her husband, the night before she departed. "In ten days, we shall expect you at Arthur Meadows as she passed them in the corridor.

with the great Van Dycks looking down on the dinner-table, the crowd of guests and servants, the costly food, the dresses and the diamonds, with, in the distance, *her* Arthur, divided from her, as it seemed, by a growing chasm. He seemed never to remember to throw her a look or a smile. He was drinking in a tide of flattery he would once have been the first to scorn; he was captured, exhibited, befooled by an unscrupulous, egotistical woman, who would drop him like a squeezed orange when he had ceased to

amuse her. And the worst of it was that the woman was not a mere pretender! She had a fine, hard brain—"as good as Arthur's nearly! And he knows it. It is that which attracts him, excites him! I can mend his socks; I can listen while he reads; and he used to like it when I praised. Now, what I say will never matter to him; that was just sentiment and nonsense; he only wants to know what *she* says; that's business! He writes with her in his mind, and when he has finished some-

thing, he sends it off to her straight. I may see it when all the world may—but she has the first fruits!"

And in poor Doris' troubled mind, the whole scene, save the two central figures, Lady Dunstable and Arthur, seemed to melt away. She was not the first wife, by a long way, into whose quiet breast Lady Dunstable had dropped these seeds of discord. She knew it well by report; but it was hateful, both to her wifely feeling and to her natural vanity, that *she* should now be the victim of the moment and should know no more than her predecessors how to defend herself.

"Why can't I be cool and cutting, pay her back when she is rude, and contradict her when she's absurd? She *is* absurd often. But I think of the right things to say just five minutes too late. I have no nerve—that's the point!—only *l'esprit de l'escalier* to perfection. And she has been trained to this sort of campaigning from her babyhood. No good growling; I shall never hold my own!"

Then into this despairing mood there dropped suddenly a fragment of the conversation of her neighbor, the Colonel. "Mrs. So-and-so? Impossible woman. Oh, one doesn't mind seeing her graze occasionally, at the other end of one's table—as the price of getting her husband, don't you know, but—"

Doris' sudden laugh at the Colonel's elbow startled that gentleman so that he turned round to look at her. But she was absorbed in the menu, which she had taken up, and he could only suppose that something in it amused her.

A FEW days later arrived a letter for Meadows, which he handed to his wife in silence. There had been no further discussion of Lady Dunstable between them—only a general sense of friction, warnings of hidden fire on Doris' side, and resentment on his, quite new in their relation to each other. Meadows clearly thought that his wife was behaving badly. Lady Dunstable's efforts on his behalf already had done him substantial service; she had introduced him to all kinds of people likely to help him, intellectually and financially; and to help him, was to help Doris.

Then why should Doris be such a little fool? So unlike her, too, sensible, level-headed creature that she generally was. But he was afraid of losing his own temper if he argued with her. And indeed his lazy, easy-goingness loathed argument of this domestic sort, loathed scenes, loathed doing anything disagreeable that could be put off. But here was Lady Dunstable's letter.

Dear Mr. Arthur:

Will your wife forgive me if I ask you to come to a tiny *men's* dinner-party next Friday at 8:15 to meet the President of the Duma, and another Russian, an intimate friend of Tolstoy's? All males, but myself. So I hope Mrs. Meadows will let you come.

Yours sincerely,

RACHEL DUNSTABLE.

"Of course, I won't go if you don't like it, Doris," said Meadows, with a smile of magnanimity.

"I thought you were angry with me, once, for even suggesting that you might." Doris' tone was light, but not pleasing to a husband's ears. She was busy at the moment in packing the American proofs of the Disraeli lecture, which with infinite difficulty she had at last persuaded Meadows to correct and return.

"Well—but of course this is exceptional," said Meadows, pacing up and down irresolutely.

"Everything's exceptional—in that quarter," said Doris, in the same tone. "Oh go, of course! It would be a thousand pities not to go."

Meadows at once took her at her word. That was the first of a series of "male" dinners, to which, however, it seemed to Doris, if one might judge from Arthur's accounts, a good many female exceptions were admitted, no doubt by way of proving the rule. And during July, Meadows lunched in town, in the lofty regions of St. James', or Mayfair, at least three or four times a week, with other enthusiastic women admirers, most of them endowed with long purses and long pedigrees.

Doris occasionally was asked and sometimes went. But she was suffering all the time from an initial discouragement and depression, which took away

self-reliance and left her awkwardly conscious. She struggled, but in vain. The world into which Arthur was being so suddenly swept was strange to her and in many ways antipathetic; but had she been happy and in spirits, she could have grappled with it, or rather she could have lost herself in Arthur's success. Had she not always been his slave? But she was not happy. In their obscure days, she had been Arthur's best friend, as well as his wife. And it was the old comradeship which was failing her—encroached upon, filched from her, by other women, and especially by this exacting, absorbing, selfish woman, whose craze for Arthur Meadows' society was rapidly becoming an amusement and a scandal even to those well acquainted with her previous records of the same sort.

THE end of July arrived. The Dunstables left town. At a concert, for which she had herself sent them tickets, Lady Dunstable met Doris and her husband, the night before she departed.

"In ten days, we shall expect you at Pitlochry," she said, smiling to Arthur Meadows as she passed them in the corridor. Then pausing, she held out a perfunctory hand to Doris.

"And we really can't persuade you to come too?"

The tone was careless and patronizing. It brought the sudden red to Doris' cheek. For one moment she was tempted to say, "Thank you; since you are so kind—after all, why not!" just that she might see the change in those large, malicious eyes, might catch their owner unawares for once. But as usual, nerve failed her. She merely said that her drawing would keep her all August in town; and that London, empty, was the best possible place for work. Lady Dunstable nodded and passed on.

The ten days flew. Meadows, kept to it by Doris, was busy preparing another lecture for publication in an English review. Doris, meanwhile, got his clothes ready and affected a uniformly cheerful and indifferent demeanor. On Arthur's last evening at home, however, he came suddenly into the sitting-room where Doris was sewing on some final

buttons, and after fidgeting about a little, he said abruptly:

"I say, Doris, I won't go, if you're going to take it like this."

She turned upon him.

"Like what?"

"Oh, don't pretend!" was the impatient reply. "You know very well that you hate my going to Scotland!"

Doris, all on edge, and smarting under the Jovian look and frown with which he surveyed her from the hearth-rug, declared that as it was not a case of her going to Scotland, but of his, she was entirely indifferent. If he enjoyed it, he was quite right to go. *She* was going to enjoy her work in Uncle Charles' studio.

Meadows broke out into an angry attack on her folly and unkindness. But the more he lost his temper, the more provokingly Doris kept hers. She sat there, surrounded by his socks and shirts, a trim, determined little figure, declining to admit that she was angry, or jealous, or offended, or anything of the kind. Would he please come and help her with his packing? She had put everything ready; but there were just a few things she was doubtful about.

And all the time she seemed to be watching another Doris, a creature quite different from her real self. What had come over her? If anybody had told her beforehand that she could ever let slip her power over her own will like this, ever become possessed with this silent, obstinate demon of wounded love and pride, never would she have believed them. She moved under its grip like an automaton. She would not quarrel with Arthur. But as no soft confession was possible, and no mending or undoing of what had happened, to laugh her way through the difficult hours was all that remained. So, whenever Meadows renewed the attempt to "have it out," he was met by renewed evasion and chaff on Doris' side, till he could only retreat with as much offended dignity as she allowed him.

It was after midnight before she had finished packing. Then, bidding him a smiling good night, she fell asleep—apparently—as soon as her head touched the pillow.

The next morning, early, she stood on the steps waving farewell to Arthur, without a trace of ill-humor. And he, though vaguely uncomfortable, had submitted at last to what he felt was her fixed purpose of avoiding a scene. Moreover, the "eternal child" in him, which made both his charm and his weakness, had already scattered his compunctions of the preceding day, and he was now aglow with the sheer joy of holiday and change. He had worked hard; he had a great success; and now he was going to live for three weeks in the lap of luxury—intellectual luxury first and foremost: good talk, good company, an abundance of books for rainy days; but with the addition of a supreme chef, Lord Dunstable's champagne, and all the amenities of one of the best moors in Scotland.

DORIS went back into the house and,

Arthur being no longer in the neighborhood, allowed herself a few tears. She had never felt so lonely in her life, or so humiliated.

"My moral character is gone," she said to herself. "I have no moral character. I thought I was a sensible, educated woman; and I am just an 'Arriet, in a temper with 'Arry. Well—courage! Three weeks isn't long. Who can say that Arthur mayn't come back disillusioned? Rachel Dunstable is a born tyrant. If instead of flattering him, she begins to bully him, strange things may happen."

The first two or three days of solitude Doris spent in household drudgery. Bills had to be paid, and mercifully there was now a little money with which to pay them. Though it was August, the house was to be "spring-cleaned," and Doris had made a compact with her sulky maids that she would do no more than sleep and breakfast at home. She would spend her days in the Notting Hill Studio and sup at an A.B.C. On these terms, they grudgingly allowed her to occupy her own house.

The studio in which she was at work was on the top of Campden Hill and opened into one of the pleasant gardens of that neighborhood. Her uncle, Charles Bentley, an elderly Academician, with an ugly, humorous face, red

hair, red eyebrows, a black skull-cap, and a general weakness for the female sex, was very fond of Doris and inclined to think her a neglected and underrated wife. He was too fond of his own comfort, however, to let Meadows perceive this opinion; still less did he dare express it to Doris. All he could do was to befriend her and make her welcome at the studio, to advise her about her illustrations and correct her drawing when it needed it.

Bentley was an old-fashioned artist, quite content to be "mid" or even "early" Victorian. He still cultivated the art of historical painting and was as anxious to tell a story as any contemporary of Frith. And as his manner was no less behind the age than his material, his pictures remained on his hands, while the "vicious horrors," as they seemed to him, of the younger school, held the field and captured the newspapers. But as he had some private means, and no kith or kin, the indifference of the public to his work caused him little disturbance. He pleased his own taste, allowing himself a good-natured contempt for the work which supplanted his, coupled with an ever generous hand for any post-Impressionist in difficulties.

On the August afternoon when Doris, escaping at last from household toils, made her way up to the studio, for some hours' work on the last three or four illustrations wanted for a Christmas book, Uncle Charles welcomed her with effusion.

"Where have you been, child, all this time? I thought you must have flitted entirely."

Doris explained, while she set up her easel, that for the first time in their lives she and Arthur had been seeing something of the great world, and—mildly—"doing" the season. Arthur was now continuing the season in Scotland, while she stayed at home to work and rest. Throughout her talk, she avoided mentioning the Dunstables.

"H'm," said Uncle Charles, "so you've been junketing?"

Doris admitted it.

"Did you like it?"

Doris put on her candid look.



Bentley was very fond of Doris, and inclined to think her a neglected and underrated wife. All he could do, however, was to befriend her, and make her welcome at the studio, to advise her about her illustrations, and correct her drawing when it needed it.

"I dare say I should have liked it, if I'd made a success of it. Of course Arthur did."

"Too much trouble," said the old painter, shaking his head. "I was in the swim, as they call it, for a year or two. I might have stayed there, I suppose, for I could always tell a story, and I wasn't afraid of the big-wigs. But I couldn't stand it. Dress clothes are the deuce! And besides, talk now is not what it used to be. The clever men who can say smart things are too clever to say them. Nobody wants 'em. So let's 'cultivate our garden,' my dear, and be thankful. I'm beginning a new picture—and I've found a topping new model. What can a man want more? Very nice of you to let Arthur go, and have his head. Where is it—some smart moor?"

Doris laughed, let the question as to the "smart moor" pass, and came round to look at the new subject that Uncle Charles was laying-in. He explained it to her, well knowing that he spoke to unsympathetic ears, for whatever Doris might draw for her publishers, she was a passionate and humble follower of those modern experimentalists who have made the Slade School famous. The subject was, it seemed, to be a visit paid to Joanna, the mad and widowed mother of Charles V, at Tordesillas, by the envoys of Henry VI, who were thus allowed by Ferdinand, the Queen's father, to convince themselves that the Queen's profound melancholia formed an inseparable barrier to the proposals of the English king. The figure of the distracted queen, crouching in white beside a window from which she could see the tomb of her dead and adored husband, the Archduke Philip, and some of the splendid figures of the English embassy were already sketched.

"I have been fit to hang myself over her," said Bentley, pointing to the Queen. "I tried model after model. At last I've got the very thing. She comes to-day for the first time. You'll see her. Before she comes, I must scrape out Joanna so as to look at the thing quite fresh. But I dare say I shall only make a few sketches of the lady to-day."

"Who is she, and where did you get her?"

Bentley laughed. "You won't like her, my dear. Never mind. Her appearance is magnificent—whatever her mind and morals may be."

And he described how he had heard of the woman from an artist friend, who had originally seen her at a music hall, and had persuaded her to come and sit to him. The comic haste and relief with which he had now transferred her to Bentley lost nothing in Bentley's telling. "Wish you joy of her. Oh, don't ask me about her. You'll find out for yourself." "I can manage her," said Uncle Charles tranquilly. "I've had so many of 'em."

"She is Spanish?"

"Not at all. She is Italian. That is to say, her mother was a Neapolitan, the daughter of a jeweler in Hatton Gardens, and her father an English bank clerk. The Neapolitans have a lot of Spanish blood in them—hence, no doubt, the physique."

"And she is a professional model?"

"Nothing of the sort, though she will probably become one. She is a writer,—heaven save the mark!—and I have to pay her vast sums to get her. It is the greatest favor."

"A writer?"

"Poetess and journalist!" said Uncle Charles, enjoying Doris' puzzled look. "She sent me her poems yesterday. As to journalism,"—his eyes twinkled,—"*I say nothing—but this: Watch her hats!* She has the reputation—in certain circles—of being the best hatted woman in London. All this I get from the man who handed her on to me. As I said to him, it depends on what 'London' you mean."

"Married?"

"Oh, dear no, though of course she calls herself 'Madame' like the rest of them—Madame Vavasour. I have reason, however, to believe that her real name is Wilkins—Elena Wilkins. And, I should say, very much on the look-out for a husband; and meanwhile she's very much courted by boys, who go to what she calls her 'evenings.' It is odd, the taste that some youths have for these elderly Circes."

"Elderly?" said Doris, busy the while with her own preparations. "I was hoping for something young and beautiful."

"Young? No, an unmistakable thirty-five. Beautiful? Well, wait till you see her. . . . H'm—that shoulder wont do,"—Doris had just placed a preliminary sketch of one of her "subjects" under his eyes,—and that bit of perspective in the corner wants a lot of seeing to. Look here!" The old Academician, brought up in the spirit of Ingres—"Le dessein, c'est la probité! Le dessein, c'est l'honneur!"—fell eagerly to work on the sketch, and Doris watched.

They were both absorbed, when there was a knock at the door. Doris turned hastily, expecting to see the model—instead of which there entered, in response to Bentley's "Come-in!" a girl of four or five and twenty, in a blue linen dress and a shady hat, who nodded a quiet "Good afternoon" to the artist, and proceeded at once with an air of business to a writing table at the further end of the studio.

"Miss Wigram," said the artist, raising his voice, "let me introduce you to my niece, Mrs. Meadows."

The girl rose from her chair again and bowed. Then Doris saw that she had a charming tired face, beautiful eyes on which she had just placed spectacles, and soft brown hair framing her thin cheeks.

"A novelty since you were here," whispered Bentley in Doris' ear. "She's an accountant—capital girl! Since these Liberal budgets came along, I can't keep my own accounts, or send in my own income-tax returns—dash them! So she does the whole business for me—pays everything, sees to everything—comes once a week. We shall all be run by the women soon."

THE studio had grown very quiet.

Through some glass doors open to the garden came in little wandering winds which played with some loose papers on the floor and blew Doris' hair about her eyes as she stooped over her easel, absorbed in her drawing—apparently absorbed. Her sub-liminal mind, at least, was far away, wandering on a craggy Scotch moor. A lady on a Scotch pony—she understood that Lady Dunstable often rode with the shooters—and

a tall man walking beside her, carrying not a gun but a walking-stick: that was the vision in the crystal. Arthur was too bad a shot to be tolerated in the Dunstable circle; indeed, he had wisely announced from the beginning that he was not to be included among the guns. All the more time for conversation, the give and take of wits, the pleasures of the intellectual tilting-ground—the whole watered by good wine, seasoned with the best of cooking, and lapped in the general ease of a house where nobody ever thought of such a vulgar thing as money except to spend it.

Doris had a severe mind as to the rich and aristocratic classes in general. Her own hard and thrifty life had disposed her to see them *en noir*. But the sudden rush of a certain section of them to crowd Arthur's lectures certainly had been mollifying. If it had not been for the Vampire, Doris was well aware that her standards might have given way. As it was, Lady Dunstable's exacting ways, her snoop, straight and fierce, on the social morsel she desired, like that of an eagle on the sheepfolds, had made her, in Doris' sore consciousness, the representative of thousands more, all greedy, able, domineering, inevitably getting what they wanted, and more than they deserved—against whom the starved and virtuous intellectuals of the professional classes were bound to contend to the death. The story of that poor girl—that clergyman's daughter, for instance: could anything have been more insolent, more cruel? Doris burned to avenge her.

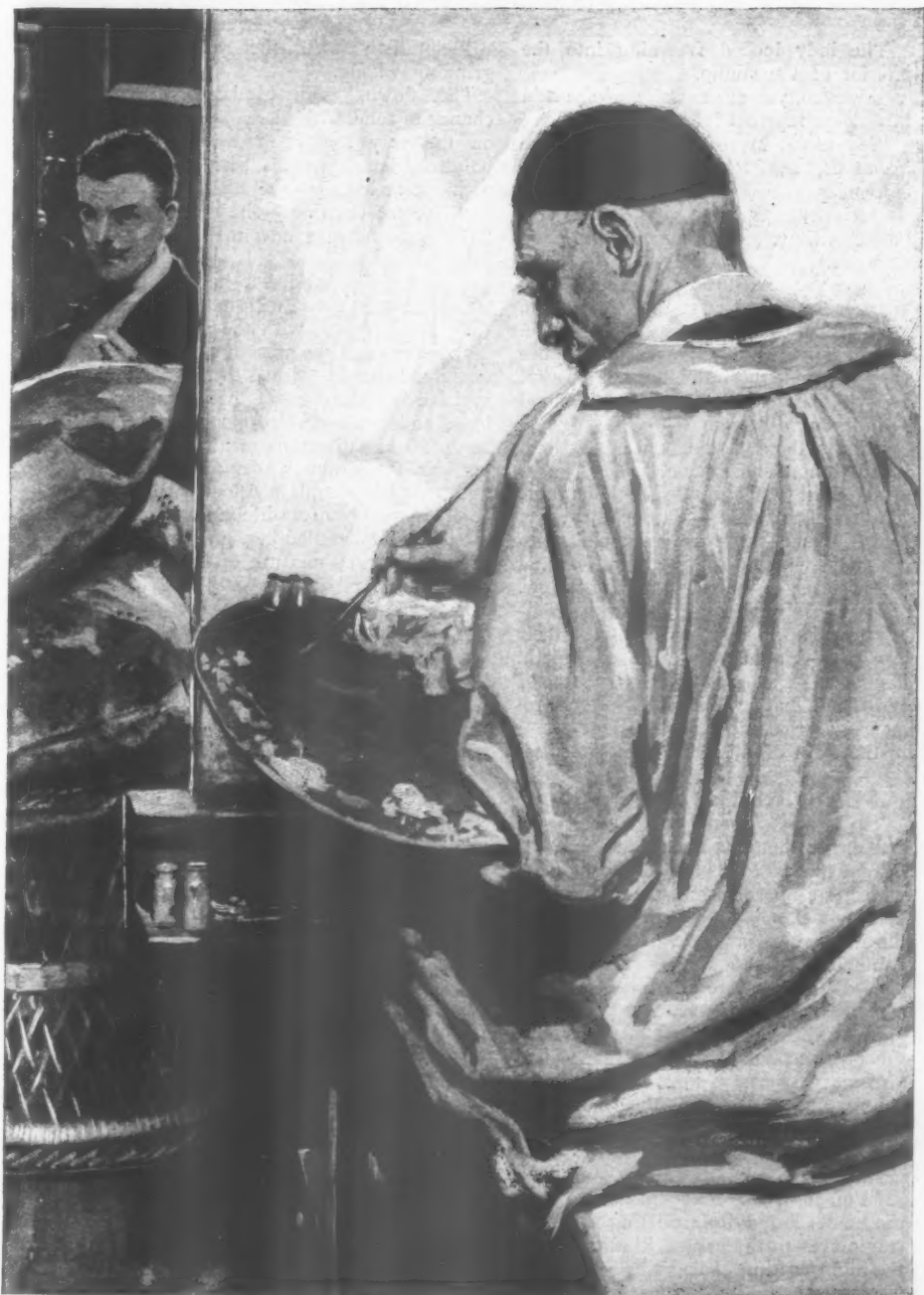
Suddenly a great clatter and noise in the passage leading from the small house behind to the studio and garden, and—

"Here she is!"

Uncle Charles sprang up and reached the studio door, just as a shower of knocks descended upon it from outside. He opened it; and on the threshold there stood two persons: a stout lady in white, surmounted by a huge black hat with a hearse-like array of plumes, and, behind her, a tall and willowy youth with, so far as could be seen through the chinks of the hat, a large nose, fair hair, pale blue eyes and a singular deficiency of chin. He carried in his arms a tiny black spitz with a pink ribbon round its neck.



The model seemed to feel the young man securely in her power, so that there was no need to pose for him, as—figuratively drawing tone of accepted authority, dropping every now and then into a broad cockney accent was severely tried, and Doris altered the position of her



as well as physically—she posed for Bentley. To the artist, she gave her opinions on pictures or books, in the languid or which produced a startling effect, like that of unexpected garlic in cookery. Bentley's gravity own essel, that he and she could not see each other.

The lady looked frowning into the interior of the studio.

"Maestro, you are not alone," she said in a deep, reproachful voice.

"My niece, Mrs. Meadows—Madame Vavasour," said Bentley, ushering in the newcomer.

Doris turned from her easel and bowed, only to receive a rather scowling response.

"And your friend?" As he spoke, the artist looked blandly at the young man.

"I brought him to amuse me, Maestro. When I am dull, my countenance changes, and you cannot do it justice. He will talk to me—I shall be animated—and you will profit."

"Ah, no doubt," said Bentley, smiling. "And your friend's name?"

"Herbert Dunstable — Honorable Herbert Dunstable — Signor Bentley," said Madame Vavasour, advancing with a stately step into the room and waving peremptorily to the young man to follow.

Doris sat transfixed and staring. Bentley turned to look at his niece, and their eyes met—his full of suppressed mirth. The son, the unsatisfactory son of Lord and Lady Dunstable,—Doris remembered that his name was Herbert,—in the train of this third-rate sorceress!

AS Doris gazed at the son—the unsatisfactory son—of Lady Dunstable, her thoughts ran excitedly to the distant moors, to that magnificent lady, with her circle of distinguished persons, holiday-making statesmen, peers, diplomats, writers, and the like. Here was a humbler scene! But Doris' fancy at once divined a score of links between it and the high comedy yonder.

Meanwhile, at the name of Dunstable, the girl accountant in the distance had also moved sharply, so as to look at the young man. But in the bustle of Madame Vavasour's entrance and her passage to the sitter's chair, the girl's gesture passed unnoticed.

"I'm just dog tired, Maestro," said the model languidly, uplifting a pair of tragic eyes to the artist. "I sat up half the night writing. I had a subject which tormented me. But I have done something *splendid*! Isn't it splendid, Herbert?"

"Ripping!" said the young man, grinning widely.

"Sit down," said Madame, with a change of tone. And the youth sat down, on the very low chair to which she pointed him, doing his best to dispose of his long legs.

"Give me the dog!" she commanded. "You have no idea how to hold him—poor lamb!"

The dog was handed to her; she took off her enormous hat with many sighs of fatigue, and then, with the dog on her lap, asked how she was to sit. Bentley explained that he wished to make a few preliminary sketches of her head and bust, and proceeded to pose her. She accepted his directions with a curious pettishness, as though they annoyed her, and presently complained loudly that the chair was uncomfortable and the pose irksome. He handled her, however, with a good-humored mixture of flattery and persuasion, and at last, stepping back, surveyed the result, well content.

There was no doubt whatever that she was a very handsome woman, and that her physical type—that of the more lethargic and heavily built Neapolitan—suggested very happily the mad and melancholy queen. She had superb black hair, eyes profoundly dark, a low and beautiful brow, lips classically fine, a powerful head and neck, and a complexion which, but for the treatment given it, would have been of a clear and beautiful olive. She wore a draggled dress of cream-colored muslin, very transparent over the shoulders, somewhat scandalously wanting at the throat and breast, and very draggled and dirty round the skirt. Her feet, which were large and plump, were cased in extremely pointed shoes with large paste buckles, and as she crossed them on the stool provided for them, she showed a considerable amount of rather clumsy ankle. The hands too were large, common and ill-kept, and the wrists laden with bracelets. She was adorned indeed with a great deal of jewelry, including some startling earrings of a bright green stone. The hat, which she had carefully placed on a chair beside her, was truly a monstrosity—but, as Doris guessed, an expensive monstrosity, such as the Rue de

la Paix provides at anything from a hundred and fifty to two hundred and fifty francs, for those of its cosmopolitan customers whom it pillages and despoils. How did the lady afford it? The rest of her dress suggested a struggle with small means, waged by one who was greedy for effect at a minimum of trouble. That she was rouged and powdered goes without saying.

And the young man? Doris perceived at once his likeness to his father—a feeble likeness. But he seemed to be simple and good-natured, and was to all appearance completely in the power of the enchantress. He fanned her assiduously. He picked up all the various belongings—gloves, handkerchiefs, handbag—which she perpetually let fall. He ran after the dog, whenever it escaped from the lady's lap and threatened mischief in the studio; and by way of amusing her—the purpose for which he had been imported!—he kept up a stream of small, cryptic gossip about various common acquaintances, most of whom seemed to belong to the music-hall profession and to be either "stars," or the satellites of "stars."

Madame listened to him with avidity and occasionally broke into a laugh.

However, she had two manners, and two kinds of conversation, which she adopted with the young man and the Academician respectively. Her talk with the youth suggested the jealous ascendancy of a coarse-minded woman. She occasionally flattered him; but more generally she teased or chaffed him. Indeed, she seemed to feel him securely in her power, so that there was no need to pose for him, as—figuratively as well as physically—she posed for Bentley. To the artist, she gave her opinions on pictures or books, in the languid or drawling tone of accepted authority, dropping every now and then into a broad cockney accent which produced a startling effect, like that of unexpected garlic in cookery.

Bentley's gravity was severely tried, and Doris altered the position of her own easel, that he and she could not see

each other. Meanwhile, Madame took not the smallest notice of Mr. Bentley's niece, and Doris made no advances to the young man, to whom her name was clearly quite unknown.

Had Circe really got him in her toils? Doris judged him soft-headed and soft-hearted—no match at all for the woman. The thought of her walking the lawns or the drawing-rooms of Crosby Ledgers as the wife of the heir, stirred in Arthur Meadows' wife a silent, and—be it confessed—a malicious convulsion. Such mothers, so self-centered, so set on their own triumphs, with their intellectual noses so very much in the clouds, deserved such sons. She promised herself to keep her own counsel and watch the play.

The sitting lasted for two hours. When it was over, Uncle Charles, all smiles and satisfaction, went with his visitors to the front door.

He was away some little time; then he returned, bubbling, to the studio.

"She's been cross-examining me about her poems. I had to confess I hadn't read a word of them. And now she's offered to recite next time she comes. Good Heavens—how can I get out of it! I believe, Doris, she's hooked that young idiot. She told me she was engaged to him. Do you know anything of his people?"

The girl accountant suddenly came forward. She looked distressed.

"I do!" she said, with energy. "Can't somebody stop that? It will break their hearts!"

Doris and Uncle Charles looked at her in amazement.

"Whose hearts?" said the painter.

"Lord and Lady Dunstable's."

"You know them?" exclaimed Doris.

"I used to know them—quite well," said the girl, quietly. "My father had one of Lord Dunstable's livings. He died last year. He didn't like Lady Dunstable. She's very overbearing. She once did a dreadfully rude thing to me. But this would be too awful! And poor Lord Dunstable! Everybody likes him. Oh—it must be stopped! It *must*!"

But who would stop it? Would any woman in Doris' position lift a finger to save Lady Dunstable from grief? Read how Mrs. Ward works out the problem in the next installment, in the July Red Book Magazine, on the news-stands June 23rd.

The Amateur Liar

*THE story of the husband's "fib"
which developed the proclivities
of a snowball rolling down hill.*

IT happened like this: Dick Braith had arranged to lunch down town with his wife. As Mrs. Braith was due at a matinée box-party, three miles up town, at a quarter past two, they had arranged to meet at the restaurant where Braith usually had his luncheon, at one o'clock sharp.

Braith left his law office, three blocks below, at precisely five minutes of one. Ninety seconds later, two blocks from the restaurant, he met Mrs. Grant. To be exact, he did not meet her. She emerged from the white doorway of the Aaron Burr Trust Company as he was passing that honored fiduciary institution. And, at sight of Braith, she launched herself upon him, a fluffy, rustly, colorful and perfumed avalanche of volubility.

Braith did not see Mrs. Grant until it was too late to escape. Personally, and under normal conditions, he would have had no keen desire to avoid her, for she was very pretty. But he was in a hurry. Also, he hated to be made conspicuous, and chiefly, he was afraid he might forget himself, later, and blurt out to his wife the fact that he had met the fair and perfumed personage.

Not that Mrs. Grant was the type of woman one does not mention to one's wife—or that Ina Braith was unwontedly jealous. But Mrs. Braith did not like Mrs. Grant. Few women of Mrs. Braith's set liked Mrs. Grant.



"Huh?" grunted the startled man, looking over his shoulder to the dining-room.

They did not know a solitary thing against her; but they did not like her. And their husbands, after a few mistakenly frank comments on Mrs. Grant's good looks or goodfellowship or chromatic taste in dress, seldom brought up her name again in talking to their wives.

Mrs. Grant had a husband. But, like the ground floor of an office building, he did not count in the enumeration of Grant stories. His wife was immensely popular with men at large. She was athrob with vitality, glowing with color, and extreme in the cut and hues of her clothes. A woman would have said she made up; a man that she did not. Do you get the distinction?

"Mr. Braith!" she hailed Dick now. "Oh, what glorious good luck to meet you!"

"Yes," he assented with piteous glee. "Isn't it, though? And what abominably

By Albert Payson Terhune


Author of

"Dollars and Cents,"

"Whose Wife?"

"The Happiness of Three Women," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY
J. HENRY



"Good morning,
Mr. Braith. This is
Mrs. Grant—Lola
Grant."

bad luck that I'm in a rush to keep an appointment. You see, I—"

"I'm so sorry," she interposed, laying an appealing hand on his sleeve. "I—I was going to beg you to help me. Haven't you even a minute?"

Perhaps there are men—oh, probably there are millions of them—who would have responded: "Woman, unhand me; I am hastening to my wife!" But Braith was only mortal. He answered promptly:

"Of course I have a minute. What's the matter?"

"It's ever so good of you," she said with quick gratitude. "And I'll be so much obliged—if—if you're certain I'm not taking too much of your time. You see, I'm a perfect idiot about business."

"Business, eh? I wondered what brought you to this workaday corner of town."

"I came here to buy a touring car," she said. "But—"

"A touring car? Why, you're in the wrong pew. Don't you know the 'Automobile Belt' is up along Broadway?"

"Of course I do. That is where they sell them. But down here is where the money comes from to buy them—in there, at the Aaron Burr Trust Company, for instance. But they won't let me have it."

"The car or the money?" he asked, puzzled.

"The money for the car. I want to get it this afternoon. We're starting off at six o'clock for a week-end, up at Tuxedo.

And I wanted so much to go in that car."

"What car?" asked the bewildered man.

"I told you I was an idiot about business," she returned, in mock chagrin. "It's just like me to begin at the wrong end. It's this way: I picked out a car this morning, a beauty. It has a dull sage-green body, and the lines are—"

"But the 'business' you wanted to consult me about?" he ventured to suggest, belatedly remembering that it was at least one o'clock, even now, and that Ina hated to be kept waiting.

"Why, I was coming to that," she said, faintly aggrieved at his curtness. "A check I'd been expecting came on the morning mail. It was for some lots that were in my name and that I'd sold. It was for three thousand, four hundred dollars. And the car is only two thousand, eight hundred dollars. So I hurried

right down to the show-rooms and chose it. I offered the man the check and said I'd take the six hundred dollars change in fifty-dollar bills, and that I wanted the car at the door by six. But he was a cranky old chap, and he said they weren't allowed to deliver cars except on cash payments, unless they had time to verify checks. He suggested that I'd better get my check cashed and come back with the money."

"I see. But—"

"Then I took it to my grocer. He's often cashed checks for me. Sometimes as high as twenty-five dollars or more. But he wouldn't cash this. He said if he had three thousand, four hundred dollars, he wouldn't be in the grocery business. He told me I'd better take it to the bank it's drawn on. So I did—the Aaron Burr Trust Company. But they won't cash it, unless I can get somebody to identify me. And—"

"That's very simple," said Braith, tingling mildly with the pure joy that comes to every man when he can explain finance problems to a woman. "I'll arrange it in two minutes for you. I don't bank at the Aaron Burr, but McNamara, the cashier, is an old friend. Come in; and if we can catch him before he starts for lunch, I'll be very glad to identify you."

"Oh, thank you a thousand times!" she sighed in blissful relief.

BUT Braith's hopes for speedy completion of the quest were futile. The cashier was busy in the president's room and would "be out any minute." "Any minute" was the twentieth minute. For nineteen horrible minutes Braith raged inwardly and grinned outwardly at the woman he could not be boorish enough to desert. He shook as he thought of the reckoning he must face from his super-punctual wife.

Mrs. Grant seemed to enjoy the wait. She chattered blithely about the car and about herself and about people she and Braith both knew. Once, when a man (whom she mistook for the cashier) came near them, she drew forth the check from her gold handbag. Braith, unintentionally, saw the signature on the slip of paper. The check was signed

"D. D. Arden," the name of an elderly and more or less objectionable man-about-town. Braith recalled what Mrs. Grant had said about the sale of certain lots, and wondered that he had never heard Arden was in the real estate business.

At last, McNamara, the cashier, came out of the president's room—and greeting Braith cordially, cast a covert glance of surprise as his companion, listened to Dick's brief explanation, then in person took the check away to be cashed, and came back with the money. Dick thanked him, heroically forcing back a cowardly yearning to ask him not to mention the affair to Mrs. Braith. Then he bade a record-time farewell to the grateful Mrs. Grant—adroitly if not over-civily deaf to her hint that he take her somewhere to lunch—and set off post-haste for the restaurant where his wife was waiting for him. He arrived breathless but only twenty-four minutes late.

Now—as all single men know—there was but one decent course open to Dick: namely, to tell his wife just how and why he had been detained. So let me rob him, once and for all, of every unmarried man's sympathy by saying that he met his wife's look of impatient query by the sputtered explanation:

"I'm horribly sorry to have kept you waiting like this, dear. I couldn't help it. Just as I'd put my hat on and started for the elevator, Bruce Lindsay blew in. He's in the deuce of a hole, over—a patent-rights suit. He's liable to lose about every cent he has. He wants me to take charge of the case for him."

Ina Braith's wifely frown melted, as Dick had subconsciously foreseen it would. The lie had been impromptu. All the way to the restaurant, Braith had been screwing up his courage to tell the truth and to face manfully the ensuing icy five minutes. Then, the clean confession trembling on his lips, he had told an asinine tale that had involved his own best friend, the husband of Ina's roommate at college.

By the time the words were out of his mouth, Dick Braith could have kicked himself for coining such a clumsy and inexcusable falsehood. Ina was not a

shrew. While she had not enjoyed waiting for him, and while her ruffled mood would not have been visibly smoothed by knowing Dick had been spending the mislaid twenty-four minutes with a woman she detested, yet he knew that after the first flush of annoyance she would have understood the matter. And now he had let himself in for a spell of self-contempt—all because he had been afraid to face a conjugal spat.

Lindsay had just come back, with his wife, from a trip to California. He had called up Braith that morning an hour after his train got in. This had given Dick the fool impulse to drag Lindsay's name into the excuse.

Ina was all solicitude.

"The poor fellow!" she exclaimed. "And just after such a jolly outing, too! Florence wrote me they'd been having the time of their lives. I meant to run over there on my way down town, but I didn't have time. I'll stop in after the *matinée*."

"If you do," croaked Dick, tingling at his hair-roots, "I needn't warn you not to say anything to her about this case of Bruce's. He doesn't want it known, even to her."

"But," expostulated Ina, "he tells her all his business affairs. I've heard him say so a dozen times. He says she's the cleverest adviser he has."

"He isn't going to tell her about this," stoutly averred Braith. "He hopes I can straighten it all out for him."

"But he *ought* to tell her," persisted Ina, "she has a right to know. She's his wife and—"

"You see," put in Dick, "it's this way: Lindsay went into the affair without consulting her. In fact—in fact, it was against her advice. And he's ashamed to let her know she was right and he was wrong. So don't speak to her about it."

"Of course, I won't," she promised. "But oh, I'm so sorry for him! It must make him fearfully ashamed, when they're so fond of each other, to have to keep a secret like that from her, to— to deceive her so!"

"Yes," limply assented Dick. "It must."

He could scarcely talk coherently. Through the din of his mental upheaval,

he heard Ina ask, "Do you think you can save his patent rights for him?"

"Whose?" he asked dully.

"Why, Bruce Lindsay's, of course," she answered in surprise. "Weren't you listening to me?"

"I—I'm afraid my mind was wandering," he faltered. "I can't think clearly about anything except that case of Lindsay's. It's going to take a lot of work and planning. He has—"

"Why!" she cried, in pleased excitement, smiling toward the restaurant's outer door. "There comes Bruce Lindsay, now! And—and he's with Mr. McNamara."

BRAITH, whose back was to the door, had turned at her exclamation. On sight of Lindsay and the Aaron Burr's cashier, he whirled back to his former position with a suddenness that set the table's furnishings a-rattle. To his guilty senses, for an instant, it seemed that Retribution was performing a miracle for his downfall. Then he remembered that McNamara and Lindsay were boyhood acquaintances and that they had a way of lunching together every week or so.

"Let's send a waiter to ask them over," suggested Ina. "There's plenty of room for four at this table. And I want to ask Bruce if Florence—"

"No, no!" exhorted Braith. "Don't! You mustn't, dear. Can't you see how worried he looks? He's trying to arrange through McNamara for a loan from the bank. He won't feel much like talking to us, just now. It'll be kinder not even to look at him. He might think he ought to come over here, out of politeness."

Dick wondered to hear his own tongue work so smoothly, without any conscious volition of his. For, mentally, he was busy visualizing the scene that must follow should the two men catch sight of them and come to their table. Lindsay would be certain to show by his manner, or by some chance word, that he and Braith had not met since his return from the West. McNamara, too, had a positive genius for saying the wrong thing.

"Dear!" suddenly exclaimed Ina.

Dick jumped—literally jumped. His wife was eyeing him in eager concern.

"Dear, you're not well!" she was saying. "You're as white as chalk, and your forehead is all wet. What is it? Tell me!"

"I'm worried," he made stuttering reply. "Worried to death over this trouble of Lindsay's. I guess we'll go now, if you don't mind. I ought to get back to the office and start right in to work on it."

Perhaps no man has grown to semi-mature age without having dreamed at least once that he is walking down some crowded street, clad only in the original garb of Eden. Other pedestrians, in his dream, have not yet noticed his lack of apparel; but he is always certain they will do so in another half-minute. Wherefore he seeks, in hot terror, to elude observation.

Dick Braith had dreamed this, again and again. And now, in real life, he went through the same ghastly sensations, as he slunk out of the restaurant in Ina's wake, trying to keep either himself or his wife from being seen by Lindsay or McNamara. For once, in that hideous day, luck humored him; unhailed by either of his friends, he gained the street.

He said good-by to the solicitous Ina at the outer entrance of the restaurant, and hurried away to his office. He had the impulse, once or twice during the afternoon, to block detection by calling up Lindsay, telling what he had done, and demanding that Bruce fulfill the Free Masonry Laws of the Married Male by standing by him. But he was ashamed to do it—ashamed to admit the lies he had told, doubly ashamed to confess he had dragged a friend's name into the story in such uncomplimentary fashion. Even with a friend as close as Lindsay, he could not do it.

Braith tried to salve his conscience by stopping at a ticket broker's on his way uptown that afternoon and buying at usurious rates two orchestra seats for that evening's performance of "Aida," at the Metropolitan. "Aida" was Ina's favorite opera, and Caruso and Destinn and Scotti and Homer were to lead the cast.

THE prospect of the pleasure he was going to give his wife went far toward soothing Dick's remorse. The broker's fearsome charge for seats seemed to him full penance for his sin. So it was with almost a jaunty step that he entered his apartment at six o'clock.

"Dick!" called Ina from her room, where she was dressing for dinner. "Bruce Lindsay telephoned a few minutes ago. He said he'd tried to get you at your office, but you'd gone. He wants to know if you're going to be home this evening. He and Florence are coming around, if you are. He says he has something important to talk over with you. I didn't tell him I knew it was the patent-rights case he wanted to talk about. I pretended I didn't know—"

"Well, I'm *not* going to be home!" fumed Dick, from the hallway where he was struggling out of his overcoat. For the memory of his lies struck him across the face at Ina's words; and he resented the raking up of a comfortably still conscience.

"But Dick!" he protested. "You *must*! When Bruce is so miserably unhappy and counts on you to help him, you can't walk off somewhere and leave him to suffer. Break whatever engagement you have, wont you, please?"

Braith had been married for nearly five years. And he knew his wife well enough to understand the feminine streak of self-sacrifice in her nature. He knew she would insist on foregoing the pleasure of an evening at the opera in order that he might be of use to his stricken friend. He groaned aloud.

"What did you say?" she called. "Where did you say you had planned to go?"

"I said," he answered, "I said I've got a sick headache and a sore throat and—and fever—and a touch of grippe or something—and I'm going to bed."

As he spoke, he yanked the opera tickets from his pockets, tore them in six pieces and flung them into a wastebasket.

"I'm going to bed," he repeated. "So please call up Lindsay and tell him I'm sick and can't see anybody at all."

Ina, all tender concern and assiduity, came running out to him, showering him



Gruffly he forbade summoning a doctor, but he had to submit to a nauseating gargle and a dose of medicine that rebelled fiercely at staying down.

with questions about his symptoms, tremblingly hoping he was not "in for an illness."

Gruffly he forbade summoning a doctor, but he had to submit to a foot-bath, a nauseating throat-gargle and a dose of medicine that rebelled fiercely at staying down. Then, dinnerless, he crawled into bed, in company with a fiercely caloric and gurgling hot-water bag, and submitted to swallowing two glasses of scalding lemonade, and to burial under triple coverings. It was a warm night, too.

Next morning he awoke quite cured. He said so himself. As he finished dressing, the telephone-bell rang. Braith, who was just leaving his room, crossed the hall to the library to answer it. Ina was in the adjacent dining-room, busy with the coffee machine. As Dick lifted the receiver and called "Hello," a feminine voice greeted him.

"Good morning, Mr. Braith. This is Mrs. Grant," it hailed.

"Huh?" grunted the startled man, looking obliquely over his shoulder toward the dining-room, ten feet away.

"Mrs. Grant," was the reply. "Lola Grant. I wanted to catch you before you started down town. We didn't go to Tuxedo after all; we're going up into Westchester for the day and lunch at the Port of Missing Men. We're starting in half an hour, and we're one man short. Wont you come along?"

"Thanks!" he snapped. "I can't."

"Oh, please do!" she urged. "You were so nice to me yesterday about the check, that I want you to have the first ride in the new car. *Do* come."

"I can't. Thanks. I—"

"If Mrs. Braith would care to join us too, we can easily make room for her," urged Mrs. Grant, cordially. "I met her for a moment, yesterday, in the Hyperian Theater foyer, and it seemed to me she looked tired. A day outdoors will do her worlds of good. Ask her, wont you? Tell her we'd love to have her. Or, better still, ask her to step to the 'phone and I'll beg her to come along. I want to tell her, anyway, what a nice man her husband is, for helping me get my money yesterday."

"It is quite impossible!" Braith cut

her short in panicky brusqueness. "Thank you. Good-by."

He slammed the receiver on the hook and made for the dining-room, morosely aware that a feminine voice over a telephone cannot possibly be mistaken for a masculine voice, even by some one ten feet away from the instrument.

"Who was that?" asked Ina, looking up from the coffee machine.

"It was Burleson's stenographer," he said, on panic-inspiration. "Burleson wants me to lunch with him and talk over some business."

"When?"

"To-day. But I can't. I'll have to put in a full day on Lindsay's case. I wont be able to get out at all, not even for—"

"To-day?" she repeated. "Why, the stenographer must have been mistaken, or else you misunderstood her. Kate Burleson was in our box-party at the matinée, yesterday. She said her husband wouldn't be back from Denver for another week."

Dick, mouth ajar, stood blinking at her. Luckily, her back was toward him, and she was pouring a cup of coffee. Braith rallied, by mighty effort, and said, mysteriously:

"Then I shouldn't have blabbed. If his wife thinks he's still in Denver, let her think so. I'm not going to stir up family trouble by having you tell her otherwise."

"Do you mean to say he—"

"I'm not the custodian of Burleson's morals. Let's talk about something else. Saturday's always a short day at the office. What do you say to a run out into the country somewhere this afternoon? I can get through work by lunch time, and we'll—"

"You just said you'd have to put in a full day on the Lindsay case," she interrupted in wonder. "You said that was why you wouldn't lunch with that beastly Burleson man. How can you get off—"

"I can't," he said dazedly. "I—I forgot. Of course, I can't. That headache of mine has left my brains all thick and mushy. Don't mind me. I must go now. I don't feel up to eating anything. Good-by."

AT twelve o'clock, Braith was dictating to his stenographer. A sorry task he made of the letters; more than once the girl looked at him in frank impatience. The telephone buzzer purred, and his office boy announced that Mr. Bruce Lindsay was on the wire. Guiltily, Dick ordered the lad to say that he had gone for the day.

The office boy transmitted this newest addition to the thriving lie-collection and departed for lunch. Braith took up the tangle of dictation once more. But in less than five minutes came a new interruption. He heard the door of the anteroom open. Steps crossed to the inner office where he sat. And to his nostrils came a gush of perfume that seemed vaguely familiar and for some reason vaguely annoying.

Lola Grant stood in the office doorway, beaming in at him with a super-friendly certainty of his delight at seeing her. The stenographer eyed the ultra-extreme style of the visitor's hat and dress—then, prim-lipped, turned to her employer. The girl had been carefully brought up, so carefully brought up that she made it a life rule not only to suspect the worst, but to be creepily certain of it.

"Good morning, Mr. Braith," said Mrs. Grant cheerily. "I wanted to see you on some terribly important law-business, so when you and Mrs. Braith wouldn't go to Westchester with us, I decided to postpone the jaunt till tomorrow, on the chance you could both go, then. And I came down here, instead. You *will* go with us to-morrow, wont you, Dick?" she ended caressingly.

Braith managed to say, stiffly:

"I'm sorry, but we can't. We've an engagement to—"

"Oh, I think you will. Yes, something tells me you will," she said, gaily. "And now sha'n't we get down to the business that brought me here?"

"I—"

"Miss Stenographer," continued Lola, turning upon that model of propriety, "it's a lovely day outside. Wouldn't you like to go for a nice walk, right now, and look at the pretty shop-windows or maybe go to the aquarium or a movie show?"

"You needn't wait, Miss Mercer," said Braith, hastily; "I shall not need you for half an hour."

Miss Mercer rose, cast a withering glare at the intruder and walked out into the anteroom, slamming the glass door behind her.

MEANTIME, Braith had gained some sort of control over his amaze and annoyance and general confusion.

"Well, Mrs. Grant," he asked in a voice studiously brusque and loud enough to penetrate to the ante-room, "what can I do for you?"

"You can ask me to sit down, for one thing," she said in gentle reproof. "And—why not ask me to lunch with you, too? It's so much nicer to talk business while one is eating."

He placed a chair for her, but affected not to hear her suggestion of lunch.

"You look sick—or is it only cross?" she said.

"Suppose we get down to business, as you suggested," he rejoined. "My time to-day is limited."

"Yet you seemed to have lots of time yesterday," she purred. "You went to lunch with Mrs. Braith after you left me, didn't you?"

"How did you know that?"

She laughed in genuine amusement at his tone of sulky astonishment.

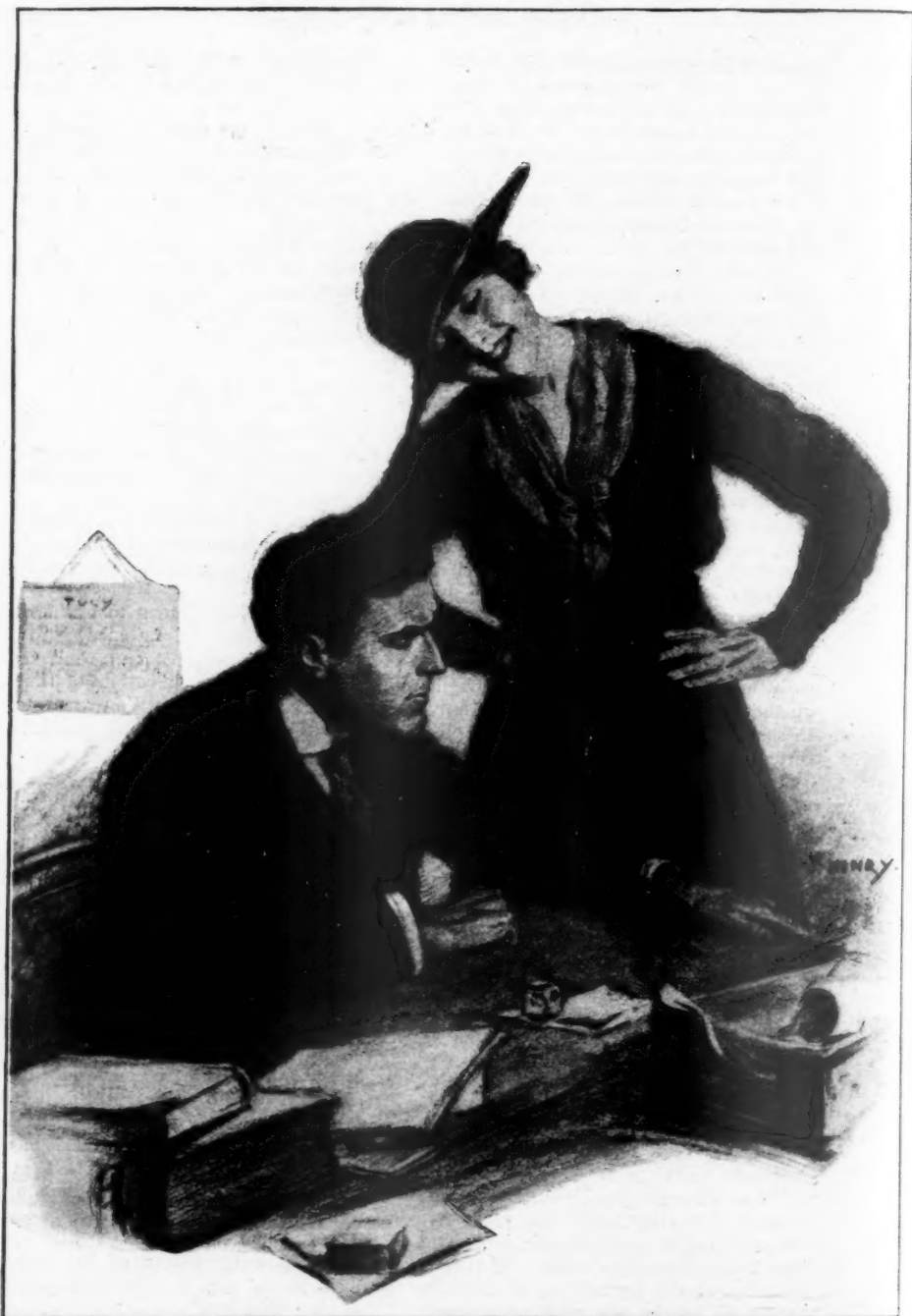
"I ought to tell you it's 'womanly intuition,'" she answered. "That's a woman's stock reply, isn't it? The way I found it out is much less thrilling. I went into the foyer of the Hyperion Theater yesterday to meet some one who was going with us on that week-end outing we didn't have. And in the foyer, waiting for some member of their box-party, were Mrs. Braith and Mrs. Burleson and two or three other women. I heard Mrs. Braith saying she'd been afraid *she'd* be late, too, because she'd an engagement to lunch with you at one o'clock, and you were nearly half an hour late and told her some business at the office had detained you."

"I see. What about it?"

"But you weren't detained by 'some business at the office,'" declared Lola.

"You were with *me*."

"Well?" he challenged, sullenly.



"You can ask me to sit down, for one thing," she said in gentle reproof. "And—why not ask me to lunch with you too? It's so much nicer to talk business while one is eating."

"And you didn't tell Mrs. Braith you were with me all that time? You didn't even tell her you had met me?" she accused, sorrowfully.

He did not reply, but sat looking almost as foolish as he felt.

"Why not?" she urged. "Were you ashamed of being with me?"

"Nonsense!"

"Of course, it's nonsense," she agreed. "But the fact remains—you went out of your way to deceive her about it. Why?"

Again words would not come at his call.

"That's your own affair, not mine," she said presently, with a little shrug; "so we'll pass on to the next cage: to the reason I came here to-day. I hear that the Slaybacks and the Annerlies and the Todds and one or two other people are having lunch at the Port of Missing Men to-morrow. They're all friends of Mrs. Braith's and yours. They're—they're not friends of mine. At least, the women of the party aren't. I wish they were. Mrs. Todd actually cut me, at the Hyperion, yesterday afternoon. So did Mrs. Burleson. They just wouldn't see me. And even Mrs. Braith barely nodded to me."

"I'm sorry," he mumbled, embarrassed.

"You'd be sorrier, if you could understand what that means to a woman," she continued, dead in earnest now. "A man can't understand. Other women get jealous of a woman, or for some reason don't like her or don't approve of her—the cats! They begin to freeze when they meet her. Then one of them ventures to cut her. Another follows suit. Then the rest can't afford to be seen speaking to a woman whom other women cut. And the first thing the victim knows, she's a melodrama outcast—for no fault of her own. And, once she's frozen out of the fold, she never in her life can hope to melt her way back into it. *I don't intend to be frozen out.*"

"It's too bad," he stammered, thoroughly uncomfortable. "But I don't see—"

"You're going to see," she retorted, her rich voice hard and metallic, the

lure wiped away from face and manner. "That's why I'm here. If the thing hasn't gone too far, there's always a chance for such a woman to get back. And the surest way is for some influential women of the set to 'take her up,' to be seen with her in public, on friendly terms. The rest see she has a powerful friend, then, and they fall in line. Mr. Braith, I want you and your wife—your wife especially—to run out to Westchester County with me to-morrow and to lunch with me at the Port of Missing Men."

"I've told you," he returned, in dire confusion, "we can't. We have an engagement. I'm sorry. We—"

"And I've told you I think you *can*. I rely on you to get Mrs. Braith to join us."

"Mrs. Braith makes her own engagements. I have no—"

"Then it's time you had. And if you use your authority, you can do it. Every husband has *some* authority, if only he's man enough to use it."

"I don't choose to coërcé my wife into doing anything," he answered hotly.

"Really, Mrs. Grant—"

"Mr. Braith," broke in the metallic voice, "a woman, situated as I am, can't afford to pick and choose her weapons. She has too few of them. She must take those that are at hand—not that she wants to, but because she has no others. So here goes: Do you care to have Mrs. Braith know you were not kept at your office on business yesterday, when you ought to have been lunching with her? Do you want her to know you were with *me*?"

"Why not?" he bluffed. "Why shouldn't I?"

"I don't know why not. But *you* must know some very good reason, or you wouldn't have lied to her about it."

His confusion was gone. Now that he caught the drift of the woman's plan, he grew suddenly cool and alert. When he spoke, there was not even a lingering shadow of courtesy or of chivalric respect in his tone.

"I don't think I need detain you any longer, Mrs. Grant," he said, rising and opening the door.

"You are mistaken," she contradicted

in perfect coolness. "Like the lamented John Paul Jones, 'I've just begun to fight.' Do you want me to tell your wife you were with me yesterday?"

"Why not?" he growled. "Why shouldn't I tell her I met you by chance and that in doing a silly kindness for you, I was in your company for twenty minutes or so in plain sight of the Aaron Burr's whole working force? Why shouldn't I tell her?"

"Because," she made answer, "she wouldn't believe you. What woman would? Why should she? She'll reason, if that was the only cause for your being late, you'd have told her the truth about it at once."

"The cashier can prove—"

"Is she so ignorant that she doesn't know one man will always back up another in the merry indoor sport of wife-deceiving? She'll believe, fast enough, that you were with *me*. But that's the only part of the story she will believe. She won't see why you should have lied to her if there was nothing to hide."

"There was nothing. I—"

"I know that. But *she* won't. Why, when I tell her the very same story, will she believe me? Not she."

"She will!" he blazed.

"Lie Number 41144," she murmured, sweetly. "By the way, I wanted to make perfectly sure you *were* afraid to tell her about me. That's why I called you up this morning."

There was a moment's pause. Then Mrs. Grant resumed:

"You deceived your wife about me—which in her eyes will amount to having deceived her *with* me. I don't know whether or not she is the kind of woman who would pump your stenographer. But if she is, I think I've paved the way for—"

"She isn't!"

"Mr. Braith, it will give me *great* pleasure if you and Mrs. Braith will be my guests to-morrow, at the—"

"We won't!"

"Surely you haven't stopped to realize—"

"I realize this is blackmail."

"It's anything it amuses you to call it," she said, unruffled. "But I want Mrs. Braith to go with us, to-morrow.

And I count on you to arrange it. Good-by—till to-morrow morning."

She started toward the door.

"Wait!" called Braith, sharply.

She turned back, her pretty face once more gracious and smiling.

"I'm glad you've decided to be sensible, old boy," she said.

"I have," he answered. "You made a bad misplay, Mrs. Grant. You had me beaten. If you had asked me for a check for a thousand dollars to keep quiet, I'm not sure you wouldn't have got it. But you stopped to kick a beaten man. And the 'kick' was in trying to make me use my wife as a tool for your social plans. You've showed me there's just one decent thing for me to do—just one thing left for a moderately white man to do—and I'm going to do it—now."

"Suicide?" she scoffed. "How thrilling!"

"No. Something twenty times harder. I'm going home to tell my wife all about it—the whole miserable thing."

"She won't believe you."

"She *will* believe me. She's *got* to believe me."

"On the strength of the past twenty-four hours' veracity-record?"

"She'll believe me because she'll know I'm telling the truth."

"You can't prove it to her."

"When a man's as damnably in earnest as I am, he doesn't *have* to prove anything."

"You're cutting your own throat."

"Perhaps. But I'm not cur enough to cut my wife's, as you wanted me to."

She sighed, then forced a laugh.

"I lose," she said, tersely. "Good-by. It's my own fault, I suppose. But how was I to know? It seemed a much cheaper price than cash."

"And it turned out to be the only price too high for a halfway clean man to pay."

"Good-by, oh most worthy of husbands," she laughed lightly, holding out her hand. "I suppose it's too late to talk about the thousand dollars you spoke of?"

"Dick!" called a voice from the ante-room's outer doorway. "Oh, there you are! Miss Mercer telephoned me you

wanted me to come down here at once. Is anything the matter?"

INA Braith came forward to the inner office. At sight of Lola she stopped short. Dick looked from one woman to the other. And, unknowingly, in that moment of wild distress, he thought aloud:

"Lord!" he babbled. "It must be *hell* to be a Mormon!"

Lola smiled lovingly up at him and gave him a reassuring pat on the shoulder. Then with a "Sorry for you, Dickie!" and a nod of cordial good-fellowship to the unresponsive Ina, she brushed past the wife in the doorway and sauntered out of the office.

And in her wake fell a long silence, the man and woman staring dumbly at each other.

"Well?" asked Ina, at last, her voice hopelessly noncommittal.

Dick Braith drew a long breath. Then, without emotion, almost without punctuation, he began to speak.

"I was late yesterday because I was with Mrs. Grant. I didn't see Bruce Lindsay. He's not in any law trouble, and if he was, I'm not his counsel. And I steered you clear of Tom McNamara because Mrs. Grant met me at the door of his bank and got me to go in and wait till he could see us, so I could identify a check for her, and I was afraid he'd blab. And I wasn't sick last night and it wasn't Burleson on the 'phone this morning. It was Mrs. Grant. She wanted us to go out in her car; and you *mustn't*. And I didn't appoint Miss Mercer as guardian of my morals to sick you onto coming down here this morning. There! I guess that's all. It's all of them I can remember, anyhow. Now fire away."

She looked at him long and keenly, her face working. Then, at a step, she stood beside him and gathered his head into her arms and pulled it down on her breast.

"You poor boy!" she soothed, her voice uncertain. "You poor, bad, lying little boy!"

Then her growing emotion got the better of her and her whole body shook convulsively.

Dick, in agony, sought to peer into her averted face, mumbling love words of reassurance, begging her forgiveness and beseeching her not to cry. And all at once he saw she was in helpless paroxysms of laughter.

"Oh, you did it so *badly*!" she gasped. "So wretchedly! What woman could stay angry at a man who can't lie better than you do!"

"But—but I—"

"I left my purse at the restaurant, yesterday, you poor child, and I went back for it. I met Bruce and Mr. McNamara on the way out. Mr. McNamara told me all about the identifying. He thought it was a joke. And he said you scuttled away from her like a scared rabbit, the first minute you could. I didn't tell Bruce what you'd said about his lawsuit. I just asked him if he'd seen you. And he hadn't. But I think he suspected something. That must have been why he called you up, last night—to warn you; men are so horrid and loyal that way."

"But—" he sputtered.

"It was mean of me to punish you with those vile medicines and things," she added. "But you really *did* deserve it, dear. And this morning I found I'd punished myself too. I found some torn-up opera tickets in—"

"But—but aren't you even sore at—at Mrs. Grant's being here just now, and—"

"Dick," she said, as though teaching a very simple lesson to a very defective kindergartner, "when a man looks as guilty as you did—and when he can't even *lie* straight—the most jealous wife on earth hasn't a thing to worry over."

"Sometimes," pondered Dick, brilliantly, "sometimes I'm almost inclined to think I—I don't quite understand women."

"No man does," Ina made answer, in a burst of unwonted confidence. "And no man ever will—until women understand themselves."

Another of Mr. Terhune's stories will be in the July issue, on the news-stands June 23rd.

Straight in The Eye

A love story of the new South; the first short story by Harris Dickson in which no negro character appears.

By Harris
Dickson

Author of "Old Reliable," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN NEWTON HOWITT

THREE metal boxes from the safe deposit had been emptied upon a plain deal table in that dingy little pen which Milo Hedrick called his office. *Pen* is exactly the word, for those whom necessity had driven here found themselves held tight and fast until old Hedrick arose to let them go.

Alone, but not lonely, the old man bent over his accumulations, engrossed in the examination of his securities, checking off collections and making memoranda. Everything was accurately done, strongly done, with the same harsh regularity which marked his features.

Milo Hedrick was no sentimentalist; those memory caskets contained no pressed flowers or locks of hair. Each scrap of paper represented live business—all except one, the deed to Delilah Plantation, time-stained and yellow. That purchase had been his first big enterprise, setting his feet on Fortune's road.

The document itself he preserved as a sort of fetic, and now he fondled it reminiscently. "Couldn't never swung that trade, if it hadn't been for Walworth Gray and old Tom Goodloe," he mused. "Always felt like I owed 'em something."

Back into the small metal box he put his only keepsake and his only undischarged obligation. Except for this deed, the envelope marked *Liabilities* was empty.

Packet after packet he returned to its proper place, each tied with a rubber band. A few he left out for action.

There were very few—the sun rarely set upon a claim due to Milo Hedrick.

"There now! Everything ship-shape, except these." He stacked his boxes: "Dan Featherstone has got to pay *this* to-day."

Hedrick laid that paper aside for vigorous attention, and took up another—a note and deed in trust signed *Mary Buckner Gray*, for five thousand, four hundred dollars, at eight per cent, due August twenty-ninth.

"'Taint business, 'tendin' to things before time," he muttered; "but I'm goin' to Saint Looey." Across the back of the note, his rough hand wrote peremptory instructions to Thomas Goodloe, attorney-at-law. "Good piece of property," he chuckled to himself, as if at some ghastly joke.

"That woman spends too much money," he decided. Still chuckling, Hedrick opened a saving's bank-book, glanced through the entries, and tightened his grim lips.

The book went into the same envelope as the Gray mortgage, and both into Hedrick's pocket, where entrance was easy and exits rare. "Reckon young Tom Goodloe will have to draw that deed for me." This was another joke, and Hedrick's face was not built for smiles.

But Hedrick imagined he was smiling, as he got up and stood in his door, looking out upon the street. Cold gray eyes peered from under grizzled thatches. Powerful hands, freckled, covered with reddish hair, hung by his side, not idly, but suggesting the wrestler's readiness.



Hedrick stalked on, and Miriam whispered, "Did you hear his teeth click?"

Two generations ago, in this same attitude, the youthful Hedrick had fronted a hostile world, prepared to grapple and hold on. Childless, and friendless through sixty years, he had grasped and held on. Good season and bad season, each paid its toll, in extended properties, larger balances and added debtors.

"Huh! Burnin' daylight." He picked up the metal boxes and, like a stiff-jointed step-ladder, strode across to the bank.

"Now then, got to go and see about the old Goodloe house," he said. Rawboned and gaunt, with mountainous features, he went gangling down the street.

With proprietary tread, he marched down the long avenue, beneath the generous water oaks, to where several ladders leaned against the tall white columns of a sedate old mansion. At each column, a painter plied his brush. He reminded them of their contractual obligations in terms which were neither courteous nor considerate—but plain.

Then he disappeared within, and from a window saw Thomas Goodloe, the younger, stop in front. But the old man was too far away to hear what Tom said when he asked the foreman, "Who is Mr. Hedrick's new tenant?"

"Don't know," answered the man. "He allowed us until September first to fix her up, top and bottom. Money can do anything."

Goodloe stood gazing at his grandfather's homestead, musing upon the changes which lack of money would bring. Some one touched his arm. "Hello Tom, coming around to-night?" asked Kirby Frazer.

"No, Kirb, I think not," the young lawyer replied.

"Better try your luck again. They beat you pretty strong last night," the other reminded.

Goodloe wasn't listening. From the gray cottage, next door, a young girl sauntered out towards the gate. She nodded smilingly to Goodloe; then she saw Kirby Frazer and halted. Frazer moved across the street; Goodloe hurried to Miriam.

"Tom," she said, "I really have business excuses for meeting you to-day.

Mother wants to pay Mr. Hedrick's interest. I'll bring the check to-morrow morning at ten o'clock."

"Can't your mother pay something on the principal?" he asked.

Miriam shook her head. "The boll-weevil were *so* destructive," she explained. "We had to reduce our rents, and take what we could get."

"I hoped you could lessen the principal a little each year."

"We'll pay it *all* out of this year's crop," she promised.

But Tom shook his head dubiously. "Miriam, the only way you'll ever get out of debt, is by rigid economy," he said.

"Don't scold; you know how Mother is. She *does* try to economize, especially while the boys are at college. When they come home—" Miriam hushed, recoiling from the tender subject of Tom's slow successes. She knew he was thinking of that, so she reached through the gate and patted his hand: "Never mind, dearie, you *will* succeed," she forecast.

"I have *one* client."

"And he's the richest man in town," she added.

"But Mr. Hedrick is very prudent with his money." Tom tried to laugh.

"Prudent being a diplomatic word," she corrected. "He's too stingy to buy a new set of teeth. Ugh! It gives me the creeps to hear those teeth click. And he's saved more than enough money on laundry to make him rich."

The young lawyer did not smile. "Your mother's note is due on September first," he reminded.

"Why Tom, aren't you mistaken?" she asked. "We counted on having another whole year."

Miriam was a practical girl, and somebody must be forced to understand. "Mr. Hedrick never permits a note to become overdue," Tom stated.

"Wants his pound of flesh!" she burst out.

"Dearie, you don't understand business; but it amounts to the same thing."

"Our case is different. Mr. Hedrick and Father were schoolmates. Father helped him a lot before he got so rich."

"Mr. Hedrick says friendship and business don't mix," he reminded her.

They were so absorbed in each other that neither of them noticed Milo Hedrick plunge out of the house—not until his reddish grizzled hair went bobbing amongst the workmen in the yard.

"I *hate* him!" Miriam whispered. "I'd hate *anybody* who took your home."

"You must not feel that way," Goodloe corrected her gently. "My father became involved before he died. Mr. Hedrick bought the homestead as an accommodation, and we continued to live in it. Mother passed away without realizing that the property was no longer ours. Of course, when there was no one but myself, I moved out."

Miriam clenched her small hands ungratefully. "I can't endure to see him stamping about like an ox in your beautiful old hall," she cried. "Such a home ought not to belong to such a man. It should be *ours*."

"It shall be ours, when I'm able to earn it," he promised.

Miriam's face changed. She kept stroking his hand. "Don't worry, dearest, we can wait until next summer to be married," she soothed. "Everything is in your favor, and no bad habits—" She hesitated, and then went on, her voice accumulating earnestness. "Now, Tom, don't be angry, *please* don't; but I wish you wouldn't gamble, not even a little bit."

"You shouldn't call it gambling," he said, "—playing once in a while with friends—which can't hurt anybody."

"Elton Ware played with friends. They *ruined* him."

Goodloe flinched. He knew many distressing details of Ware's undoing, which Miriam had never heard.

"And there's Kirby Frazer waylaying you on the street. I can't help feeling ashamed when I see you talking to him."

Goodloe leaned forward across the gate. "Miriam, dearie, I had already made up my mind not to play cards after the first of September. I'll promise you to swear off—after the first."

"And you're not angry with me? Not a teeny-wee bit?"

Tom Goodloe clasped both of her hands. "You precious, precious child," he whispered, "I never dreamed you were letting such a trifle worry you."

"I feel safe, *now*," She smiled. These Goodloe men always kept their promises.

Milo Hedrick watched them holding hands. His lips parted in one of those grim convulsions intended for a smile—cheerful as a crack in a granite gravestone. He came towards them, and Miriam slipped her hand away from Tom. Hedrick nodded gruffly. "Mr. Goodloe, when will you be at your office?" he asked.

"Three o'clock—sharp."

"I'll come at half-past four."

Hedrick stalked on, and Miriam whispered, "Did you hear his teeth click?"

FOR more than forty years, a sign with precise gold letters had stared diagonally across the open spaces at a box-like courthouse, standing aloof in the center of its square.

THOMAS GOODLOE
Attorney and Counselor-at-Law

For three vacant years, it is true, the old lawyer's door had been closed, until Thomas Goodloe the younger returned from college and squeezed a dozen new text books amongst the musty ones upon his father's shelves. Young Goodloe had smiled up confidently at a steel engraving of his father in ruffled shirt and broad black neckerchief. With abundance of bottled energy, the boy sat down to wait until clients should come and pull out the cork.

The first who came was Milo Hedrick, his father's life-long client—so cordially detested that nobody followed his lead to the fledgling counselor. Shrewd old Hedrick clicked his teeth. "Reckon he'll 'tend to my business all the sharper," he said.

Goodloe sat smoking his pipe, waiting for Mr. Hedrick and glancing restlessly at the clock—nearly half-past four. From his upper vest pocket he took a small red leather memorandum book and opened it, furtively. At the top of the left-hand page he had written the word *Lost*, and on the right-hand page *Won*. Under each heading was ranged a column of neatly-penciled figures—much longer under the *Lost*.

Goodloe ran up the totals, smiling and

frowning at the caprices of luck which those figures represented. His face settled into a frown; the *Lost* total was greater than he would have believed. "No more after September first—*that's* settled." Quickly he slipped the memorandum book into his pocket; for somebody was coming up the stair—bounding up, three at a time. Kirby Frazer thrust in his head, at the door. "Come along, Tom; better hurry, or you won't get a seat," he advised.

Goodloe snatched his hat, then checked himself. "Can't go, Kirby, not for twenty minutes, or so," he said.

"What! Haven't got a client?"

"Yes." Stoically Tom returned his hat to the rack and forced himself to sit down.

Frazer fidgeted. "All right, get rid of your client, while I run over and hold a seat," he said.

Goodloe walked to the window and gazed out blankly, until his stairs began to protest beneath Milo Hedrick's dogmatic and aggressive tread. Many human creatures protested just as helplessly when this old man trod upon them. Hedrick stood at the threshold and demanded: "Did Featherstone pay my judgment?"

"Not yet, Mr. Hedrick. To-morrow is his regular day for coming to town," Tom explained.

"I allowed him until *to-day*, not to-morrow. Ain't this the eighth o' August?"

"Yes, I know. Dan is as good as gold, but he's had pretty hard sledding for two years."

"None o' my look-out," growled Hedrick. "What I want is my money. There'll come a day when I can't lay up a cent." Hedrick snapped his big silver watch-case and clicked his teeth. "Four-thirty! When do you shut up shop?"

"At five."

"If Dan Featherstone don't pay that judgment by five o'clock, issue the execution," he directed. "Sic the Sheriff on him."

There was no use in storming back at Hedrick, so Goodloe tried the soft answer: "Mr. Hedrick, I'd rather not put that boy to unnecessary cost and em-

barrassment. He'll pay your two hundred to-morrow."

"Make him pay it *to-day*. I'm goin' to St. Louis to-morrow at twelve-thirty."

"But, Mr. Hedrick, the boll-weevil caught Dan last year, and now it's the high-water. Be a little easy on him. He'll pay."

"You bet he'll pay," retorted Hedrick. "He's got property. Send the Sheriff; take everything he's got." He jammed both fists into his pockets. Hedrick had a good face—good to strike matches on—hard and rough, with sand-paper skin. "Tom Goodloe, you talk wishy-washy like your father. That's why he never *had* anything—let people honeyfuggle him. With all the money *he* made, he oughter died rich. Him an' me set out in this world together. Tom went in for the law, an' I started to swappin' hosses; from that got to buildin' levees an' tradin' in plantations. When I die, my estate will be worth something."

"Father made his *life* worth something," the lad observed quietly, with a glance at those high-bred features in the frame above him.

"Oh yes, oh yes, your father an' me was different," assented the old man. "*He* could amount to something without money, and I couldn't. You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. So I skirmished around and got the dough—a pin a day is a groat a year." Hedrick clenched his bear-trap jaws and admitted, "Folks spoke mighty well of Tom Goodloe. I reckon they say I'm hard. Tom had to trot with his own crew, high-livers, poker players and such. I never did trust no man that flung a card—except Tom. But I will say *this* much for your father—he always could look every man straight in the eye."

Again Kirby Frazer ran up the stairs. Seeing Hedrick, he stopped outside and stood beckoning. Goodloe nodded. "All right, Kirby; I'll be with you in a minute," he promised.

Hedrick's hair bristled. "What does that Frazer feller want with you?"

"Nothing; he just dropped in."

"Tell him to drop out. Elton Ware used to trot with him—before Elton trotted plumb off."

Goodloe winced at this allusion to Elton Ware. In the charitable slang of the tables, Elton had "over-played himself," failing to distinguish between his own money and that of the bank. Hedrick went on brutally: "Elton Ware turned up short, and we had to fire him. Frazer knows how I feel; that's why he can't look me straight in the eye. Watch him duck out o' my sight. . . . Huh! I'm talkin' too much—'taint business. If Featherstone pays, keep out your forty, and bring me one hundred and sixty."

The old man marched towards the door. Kirby Frazer drew back into the dark end of the hallway and "ducked," as Hedrick predicted. Hedrick sniffed contemptuously and turned. "Has Mrs. Gray paid her interest?" he asked.

"No, Miss Gray will pay it to-morrow morning at ten."

"Good business. Slap it in the bank. Can't give women an inch, or they'll take an ell." Then he lumbered down the stairs.

The young lawyer was reaching for his hat, and Frazer was sneaking in at the door, when Hedrick came back. Frazer ducked again, which seemed contemptible. Hedrick stalked in and sat down. "I want to deed a storehouse to a certain feller, on condition that he goes into partnership with a certain other feller," he said, "*an' occupies the building*. That can be did accordin' to law?"

"I think so—a conveyance upon condition precedent."

"An' he can't touch the property till he goes into partnership with the feller I name?" asked Hedrick.

"No. The title will not vest in him until the condition is complied with. But," Goodloe suggested, "there would be nothing to prevent him from complying with the condition, then immediately dissolving the partnership."

Old Hedrick laughed; his voice was more agreeable when he swore. "Reckon I'll have to chance it," he said. "Heap o' risk in business. Go ahead, draw her up, rough. Leave the description blank, and the names blank. I'll fill 'em in after I spell over it a bit—bein' right smart of a jack-leg lawyer myself."

Kirby Frazer kept peeping in at the door, which made Goodloe restless. "Mr.

Hedrick, can't I draw this deed to-morrow morning?" he asked.

"No, sirree. I want it *now*."

With childish petulance, Goodloe switched on a light and took down some authorities from the book-shelves. Frazer, seeing him anchored at his desk, slipped noiselessly down the stairs.

It was half-past five, and Hedrick was back. The conveyance had been drawn up. "Now, Goodloe, this deed is hoss-high, bull-strong and pig-tight?" he demanded.

"That's a valid deed, I think, Mr. Hedrick," answered the young lawyer.

"Ef 'taint, I'm holdin' you responsible." His teeth clicked; he darkened the door and paused: "I'll be here at nine o'clock sharp to-morrow morning, to get that Featherstone money—or issue the execution." Then the stair creaked beneath his heavy tread.

"Hurry up, Tom—two vacant seats," Kirby Frazer called.

"Can't play, Kirb," replied the lawyer. "Those fellows cleaned me out last night, lock, stock and barrel."

Kirby caught his arm. "Come along," he insisted. "Jimmie will let you have all the chips you want. Pay when you get ready."

"I had about made up my mind to quit," demurred Goodloe.

"Quit? What are you going to do with yourself? Stand in front of the cigar-store like a wooden Indian?"

"I can't afford to lose the money. Besides, it's not good for a young lawyer."

"All the big-bug lawyers used to play poker," asserted Frazer. "Look at Prentiss Foote, Henry Clay—the whole caboodle of 'em."

"The same vices would never put me in the same class," said Tom.

Frazer laughed. "After your bad luck these last three plays, you ought to try and get some of that money back," he declared.

"No." When Tom Goodloe shook his head with that decisive motion, there was no use tugging at his elbow. Frazer let go. "I'll have to hurry, or somebody'll get my seat," he said.

Like a thoroughbred colt fretting at the hitching-rack, Goodloe watched him from the window and reflected upon

what Hedrick had said. Kirby *couldn't* look him straight in the eye—that was the truth.

It was nearly six o'clock. Goodloe had pulled down the window and was preparing to close his door, when Dan Featherstone came in—a slender, much-tanned lad. "Hello, Tom," he called, "just did get here in time,"—handing the lawyer a roll of bills. "Tom, I hate to talk about your client," he went on, "but he's the tightest-fisted old rascal—"

"Mr. Hedrick is *not* a rascal," Goodloe corrected.

"No, I take that back. Never heard of his doing a dishonest thing—or a kind one. Did you ever see that old skin-flint gloat over his interest when some poor devil pays up?" Featherstone's fine lip curled in disgust.

"Dan,"—Goodloe held out his hand,—"I was mighty sorry I had to sue you."

"That's all right. If you hadn't taken the case, some shyster might have helped old Hedrick make it harder," commented the farmer.

"You see, Dan, it's this way: Mr. Hedrick is my only client—inherited from father," explained Goodloe. "He brings enough business to keep me alive, if I smoke a pipe instead of cigars."

While Goodloe wrote out the receipt, Featherstone leaned over his shoulder. "Make it to me and my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns forever," he said. "I want two hundred dollars' worth of receipt." Having judicially approved the document, Dan put it carefully into his purse.

The two young men passed out together. At the street door, Goodloe remarked, "I'm going to take this money to my client: wont you come along?"

"Thanks, I'm too busy,"—laconically.

SOMETHING extraordinary must have happened: Hedrick's office was closed, twenty minutes before its usual hour. Goodloe called in at the bank. Mr. Hedrick hadn't been there, nor at the lunch counter where he took his meals.

Tom Goodloe's time was empty, and his pockets full—forty dollars of his own, a hundred and sixty dollars that belonged to Hedrick.

Insensibly he began to hurry along the old familiar path. He was not aware how strong this habit had grown upon him. To begin with, there had been an occasional game, for nominal stakes, at the house of an intimate friend. Little by little—to let the losers get even—they standardized their limit; then the game took quarters in a properly-fitted room. That's where Jimmy came in.

Business men were becoming less and less willing to trust their finances in the hands of attorneys who gambled. So Goodloe never entered Jimmy's room by the front stair, but turned in at the cigar store and passed through an alley. This reminded him: he was afraid to *have people see him*. He was hiding, as Kirby Frazer had hidden, to avoid old Hedrick's eye. Goodloe balked. But he had the habit of climbing those dingy stairs.

The game was running seven-handed. Seven men with frozen faces scarcely glanced up. Jimmy shoved a stack in front of the vacant chair. Goodloe pulled out a twenty and passed it across to Jimmy. A winning was due to Goodloe; but he didn't make it. His first stack dwindled, chip by chip, for two-thirds of its height, then collapsed on the ruins of a flush.

"Fresh stack, Jimmy." He tossed out his other twenty, pulled a green shade over his eyes and sat closer to the table.

The second stack did not dwindle; it rocked and tottered, and vanished—when he made a jack-full against four sevens. Goodloe had lost his own forty dollars before his chair got warm. One moment he hesitated; then he took twenty from Hedrick's roll—borrowed it temporarily, to be replaced out of the next pot. The Goodloes were not quitters.

Tom Goodloe arose from the table without a cent. His fee was gone, and Milo Hedrick's collection. "Good night, gentlemen," he said. Kirby Frazer was winning steadily.

NEXT morning Tom Goodloe opened his office a half hour earlier than usual. He had been awake since daylight, and must go somewhere. With less to do than to think about it, he took

out his red memorandum book, and in its proper column entered, "August twenty-seventh, two hundred dollars, lost."

Somewhere deep in his consciousness, he made the entry of another loss. For the first time Thomas Goodloe, the younger, realized that he was afraid—afraid of a clock, and afraid of a man. It was now eight-fifteen. Mr. Hedrick would be here at nine for Dan Featherstone's money—nine, *sharp*. Just as surely as that clock struck nine, Hedrick's foot would strike the bottom of the stair.

Goodloe's mind ranged through the long list of his friends. A dozen men would gladly lend him money. But he might feel obliged to give a reason. Goodloe never minced matters with himself. As a lawyer he had appropriated to his own use a collection which belonged to his client. "I'm a grown man, not a baby," he muttered, with more contempt for a weakling who had been led astray than for the self-reliant criminal who did the leading.

Goodloe edged away from the window. "Mr. Hedrick is leaving town at twelve-thirty; he can't get back until Monday," he considered. "By that time—" He did not mean to run, but that first involuntary step towards the door threw him into a panic. He ran out, nervously, turned the key, and sped down-stairs. Before venturing upon the street, he peered cautiously both ways, then crossed to an opposite doorway, where he could dodge up-stairs.

Punctually, at one minute before nine, old Hedrick came charging down the street, three steps in advance of the Sheriff, whose short, fat legs waddled in vain to keep up. Goodloe wondered how Hedrick had found him out so quickly. Hedrick had a mighty keen nose. The two men climbed the stair and pounded on the lawyer's door.

Presently they clattered down again, Hedrick holding the lead, with hat in hand, and grizzled hair flying—unmistakable symptoms that the grim old man was fretted. "Maybe he's over yonder," he called to the official. He jerked his thumb towards the courthouse, and they went.

At ten o'clock, Miriam Gray turned the corner and hurried up the stair. Tom had almost taken the risk of meeting her, when Hedrick swooped down and stopped her with an abrupt question. Miriam shook her head and went slowly back home.

Thrice again before noon, Hedrick clamored at his lawyer's door, which told no tales. After the third failure, Goodloe watched him as he flopped away. "Gone to catch his train," he thought; and he was ashamed of such intense relief.

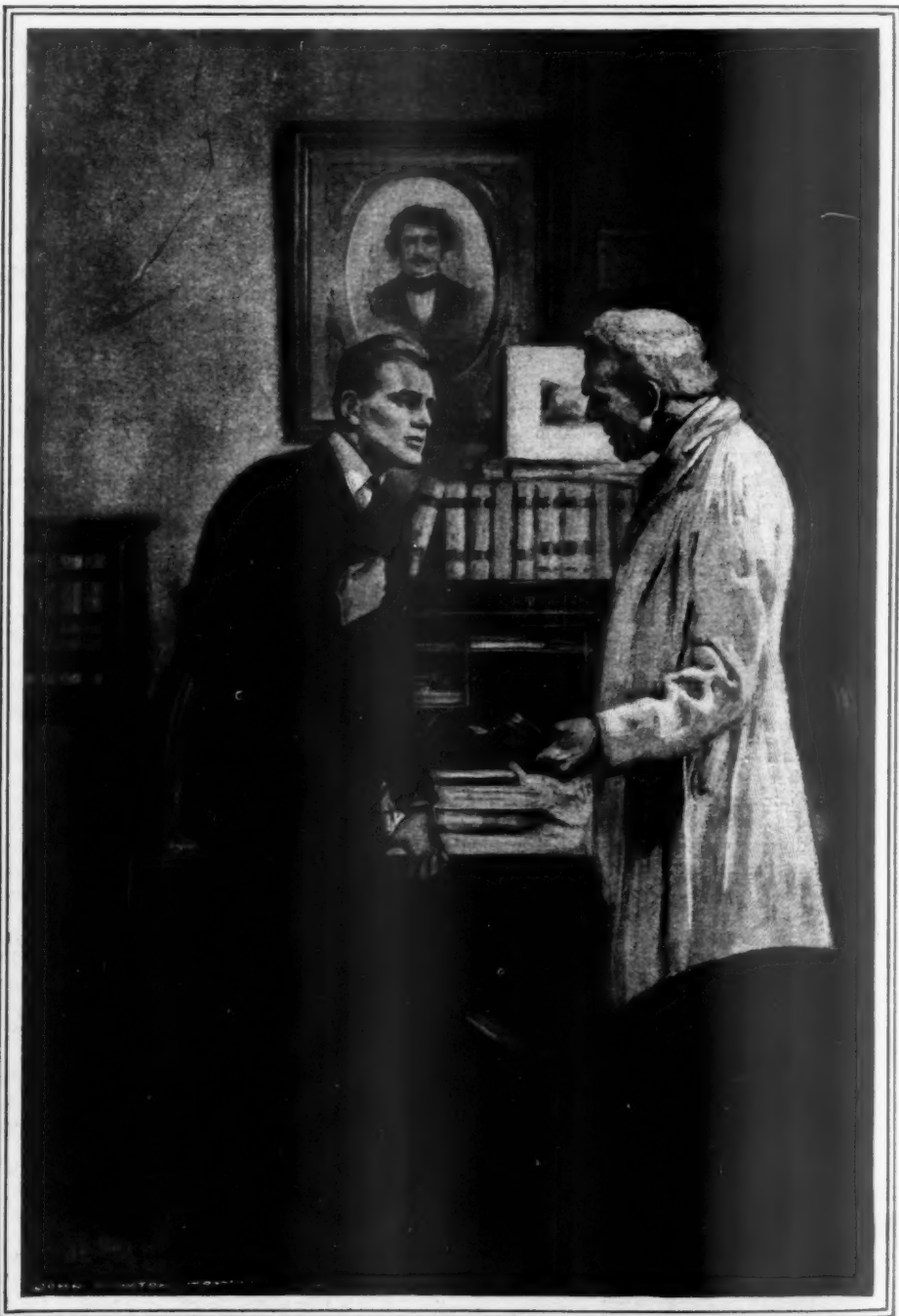
It had passed one o'clock before the young lawyer felt safe to settle in a chair at his office window. Goodloe wasn't thinking of old Hedrick, nor yet of the hundred and sixty dollars. He was considering himself, the humiliation of hiding, of turning Miriam from his door. The money he could raise and pay, far easier than he could wipe out that mortgage upon his self-respect. There was no palliating the offense of misappropriating a client's money, entrusted to him upon faith in his own integrity—and his father's integrity before him. That's what hurt. Goodloe's pride scorned the "baby-act"—that he had not intended to do it.

"Here's a contradiction of Blackstone," he reflected impersonally. "This crime does not seem to depend upon the intent. If I could replace this morning the money I took last night, most people would consider that honest. Not having the money is what makes me—an embezzler."

A heavy foot struck the bottom step. Goodloe bounded erect. He could not be mistaken. "Old Hedrick missed his train!" he thought; then: "No. Accidents and delays never occurred on Hedrick's schedule."

The angry client entered and found Goodloe fronting him squarely. "What's the matter, Goodloe?" he fretted. "I've been here forty times this morning."

Hedrick declined to sit down. He jerked a paper from his breast pocket and paced the floor, waving it. Hedrick rarely swore. His looks and the clicking of his teeth were more denunciatory than oaths. He sputtered and sizzled, like a live wire. "That scoundrel! Dal-



"What the thunderation you drivin' at?" demanded his client. Goodloe braced himself and looked straight into Hedrick's eye.

zell's sued me," he raged. "Here's the paper he put in court against me. Says I cheated him out o' Rokeby Plantation. Pack o' lies from beginning to end. Read it! Read it!"

Goodloe had no time to catch his breath; Hedrick thrust a document into his hand. "Read that," he yelled; "then go after him."

Rapidly Goodloe scanned the document, a bill in chancery, alleging fraud, collusion, conspiracy, forgery. The lawyer skimmed through its cut-and-dried phraseology. "Mr. Hedrick, that's pretty salty, and not a word of it true," he declared.

Being familiar with the chain of transactions by which Milo Hedrick had acquired Rokeby, Goodloe knew that these allegations were a slanderous distortion of facts. Mr. Dalzell had contracted lavish debts, neglected them, and lost his property. The transaction was scrupulously fair.

"I rather think you are right, Mr. Hedrick; I wouldn't stand this," said the young lawyer.

"You *rather* think! You *know* I'm right—and I *aint* goin' to stand it. Take my case; burn him up. Spend money. Charge me a *big fee*—here's five hundred—cash on account."

Hedrick tore open the black leather wallet that he habitually carried, and rustled out five crisp hundred-dollar notes.

"What's this for?" Goodloe inquired.

"For Goodloe," rasped Hedrick; "retainer fee—aint that what you lawsmiths call it?"

"Yes; but *five* hundred."

"Listen to me, Tom Goodloe: It don't pay to set yourself down for a cheap lawyer. That property's worth fifty thousand. Judge Hammet would charge me a thousand to take my case. If you aint got more sense than him, you aint you daddy's son. Now get busy and earn it."

Goodloe stood listening, and staring at the largest retainer he had ever received. But Hedrick allowed him no time for dreams.

"Get to work! Get to work!" Grasping both shoulders, the powerful old man crumpled his attorney into a chair,

dipped the pen and placed it in his hands.

"Call him a liar an' a sneak-thief. Prove it on him. Scorch his coat-tails."

From Hedrick's point of view, Goodloe did not grasp the situation. His eye refused to sparkle, and the fighting blood of the Goodloes never flooded his cheeks. He dawdled with the pen, then laid it aside.

"Get busy, Goodloe; I had to miss that twelve-thirty; got to catch the five-twenty train for Saint Looley."

"Mr. Hedrick, I was thinking of—another matter," he began.

"Don't think of another darn thing," cried the old man, "but this. What ever you do, I'll pay for it. Pay for it yourself—McRaven will honor your checks at the bank. If a man can't trust his lawyer, same as he trusts his wife, 'taint no use in havin' a lawyer."

A slow flush crept into Goodloe's cheeks, went stealthily out again, and left him very pale.

"Mr. Hedrick." The young man glanced into those fixed gray eyes, then turned away. "Mr. Hedrick, I want to tell you something."

"Wait till I get back—this aint no time for swappin' hosses."

The hall door stood open; Goodloe stepped over and locked it. Then he walked back firmly and returned Hedrick's five-hundred-dollar retainer.

"You are quite right, Mr. Hedrick," he declared. "If a man can't trust his lawyer, as he trusts his wife, they'll never get along."

"What the thunderation you drivin' at?" demanded his client.

Goodloe braced himself and looked straight into Hedrick's eye. "I want to tell you about that Featherstone collection—"

Hedrick shook his grizzled mane. "One thing at a time," he said, "an' they wont get mixed. Sit down! 'Tend to Dalzell!"

"No." The younger man spoke with equal decision. "You must hear this before I let you out of that door. I collected your money from Featherstone, and gambled it off last night—yours and mine too."

"The hell you did!"

Tom Goodloe faced him—with the prominent cheek bones, broad brows and firm chin of all the Goodloes. His unwavering eyes looked directly into Hedrick's. It was Hedrick who turned away.

"I didn't know—I didn't know you gambled," he said.

"That's why I'm telling you—a business man *ought* to know his lawyer. I could replace your money out of that five hundred, and you'd never know I gambled it off. But I could never *look you straight in the eye*. That's why I sneaked out of the office this morning—and felt like a cur dog. Now listen to me again: I have misappropriated one hundred and sixty dollars that you trusted me with. I can't pay it. I don't know when I can pay it. You may *tell* whom you please, and *do* what you please. That's the worst that any man can say of me. I won't have to lie, or hide."

Old Hedrick had been standing with his head down, examining the time-worn carpet. He went shuffling toward the door with an uncertain step that seemed queer in Hedrick. Having turned the key, he wheeled abruptly and for the first time met the lad's unflinching gaze. "What do you call that—in the law?" he asked.

"Call what?"

"The thing you done."

Steadfastly, Goodloe answered him: "Embezzlement."

Hedrick slammed the door behind him, tumbled down-stairs like an avalanche, and his impetus bore him to the middle of the street. From the window, Goodloe saw him stand a moment, rigid and uncompromising. Then, like a gargoyle roused to grotesque life, old Hedrick went flopping across open spaces to the courthouse. Goodloe stood and watched until he saw the old man come plunging out of the courthouse, head down, followed by the Sheriff. Hedrick called into the bank at the corner. Mr. McRaven, the white-haired president, came out.

Goodloe's lip quivered. "I wonder why he's bringing Mr. McRaven?" he asked himself. Mr. McRaven had been a life-long friend of the elder Goodloe, and Tom dreaded to have him know.

Goodloe had never supposed that he could wait so calmly for humiliation like this. Hedrick led in his posse. The lawyer extended courteous welcome.

"Sit down, gentlemen."

The Sheriff took his seat on the edge of a chair. Mr. McRaven sat upon that old-fashioned mohair sofa, which, like himself, belonged to bygone generations. Old Hedrick remained standing.

"Tom Goodloe, I've got no time for foolishness," he rasped. "Never had anything to rile me up so 'bad. It's mighty worrisome to warm a snake, then have him turn and bite you. The Sheriff will keep a man in the office to-night, ready to serve any papers you put in against Dalzell. You may need a lot of bonds and things, so I brought Mr. McRaven. Never gave a bond in my life. Plank down the spot cash. Give your checks on McRaven. Now I've fetched you three together—get to work. . . . Goodloe, here's your five hundred dollars."

Goodloe stood bewildered, looking from the money to Mr. Hedrick. The banker spoke first, in a precise, old-time voice:

"Mr. Hedrick, am I to understand that you authorize Mr. Goodloe to draw checks on our bank?"

"Aint that what I said?" demanded Hedrick.

"To what amount?" asked the bank official.

"No limit—every cent I've got."

"That's a big responsibility for such a young man."

"I've got just that much confidence in young Tom Goodloe."

The banker nodded. "Very well, Mr. Hedrick," he said. "Put it in writing to protect the bank."

"Can't you take *my* word, for *my* money?" yelled Hedrick.

"You might die—something might happen."

"All right; business is business. I reckon." Hedrick plumped himself down at Goodloe's desk and wrote:

Cotton National Bank:

Pay all checks signed Milo Hedrick, by Thomas Goodloe.

"Does that suit you?" he asked.

"Quite sufficient." Mr. McRaven tucked the paper in his pocket.

Hedrick rose. "Mr. McRaven, here's your chance to consult Goodloe about that other bank case," he said. "Don't take too much of his time. He'll charge you like fun."

McRaven spoke economically: "Mr. Goodloe, since Mr. Culpepper's death, we have elected no attorney for the bank. Mr. Hedrick desires that you be chosen, and I approve. We need a *young* man, one of ability and sterling character."

Goodloe glanced at Hedrick's stolid face, then listened to McRaven: "Mr. Hedrick tells me that you are attending to the Dalzell matter—our case is very similar, and we want you to handle it."

Choking back a gasp, Goodloe thanked the white-haired banker. With a courtly inclination of the head, the old gentleman arose. "I shall come over to-morrow morning at ten, and put you in possession of the facts," he said.

Hedrick took McRaven by the arm. "You folks come on away and leave Goodloe alone—he's got *my* work to do," he said. "Goodloe's going to have so darn much work that he won't have no time to skylark."

The three men were leaving. Goodloe stood in the middle of the floor, trying to readjust his faculties, when Milo Hedrick turned back and thrust out a rugged hand. "Good-by, Tom," he said, with a pat on the shoulder. It was the first time Mr. Hedrick had ever called him "Tom," or patted him on the shoulder, or shook his hand in such rough-kindly way. Old Hedrick looked him straight in the eye with solemn, unmoving countenance. "L'arnt something, didn't ye, laddie?" he said. Then the flint-hearted client tramped down the stairs.

"Yes, I've learned something." Goodloe took out the red memorandum book, tore it up and dropped the fragments into his waste-basket.

"TOM, aint you goin' to dinner?"

The lawyer glanced up from a wilderness of legal papers—the case of *F. E. Dalzell et al. vs. Milo Hedrick*. The defendant himself stood in the door and rasped his rough hands together—like

a pair of dry sponges. "Here's something else important." He was holding out a big sealed envelope addressed to Miss Miriam Gray.

"Did Mrs. Gray pay that interest?" he asked.

"Miss Gray came with a check, but I was not in the office," Tom said.

"It's *got* to be settled," pounded Hedrick. "Go down to their house right away. I'd be squirming an' wrigglin' on that train if I left a lot o' tag-ends behind me. Let the gal open them papers—*she's* got hoss sense. Then you talk straight to the old lady—and don't be mealy-mouthed."

Again Old Hedrick left Goodloe standing in the middle of the floor, and went lumbering down the steps. Tom Goodloe ran to the door and called, "What do you want me to do?"

"Full directions inside, like it says on the patent-medicine bottle." And Hedrick chuckled to himself.

Goodloe slammed down the envelope on his desk. "I don't care *what* he's done for me, I'm not going to harass Mrs. Gray," he said. "But I've *got* to do something." So Goodloe telephoned Miriam to come at once—on business.

Miriam's eyes were so big and blue and anxious that Goodloe said unprofessionally foolish things to begin with. The girl drew herself away. "Now, Tom, you sit at your desk," she instructed. "Remember we are in a lawyer's office, and strictly business. Here's the check for your interest. I came this morning and your door was locked."

"Yes,—I was— Now, listen Miriam: Our business may be very disagreeable." Goodloe pushed the threatening envelope across his desk, but kept hold of it. "Don't open that yet. I shall refuse to proceed against your mother, but Mr. Hedrick can employ some other lawyer who'd be glad to make the fee."

Miriam's lip began to quiver. "He wants his money?" she asked.

Goodloe nodded. "It's too late to trouble your mother. You and I will see what must be done."

He let go the envelope. Miriam tore off the end, and took out the first paper, which was written in Milo Hedrick's hand. Miriam began to read, her brows

puckered with a delicious bewilderment. "Tom, I—I—don't understand—" she began.

Goodloe stood behind her chair, and his eyes raced across those crabby-looking pages. He caught up the document, hastened to the window and read it through—twice. Miriam watched him anxiously, one small hand stilling the tremor of her bosom, her eyes seeking in his face what he found on the paper. Goodloe had finished reading; he leaned against the window-casing, held the paper in his hand and stared.

Miriam fumbled nervously at the envelope and brought out something else—another something which she could not understand. Slowly she rose and took her rightful place beside Tom Goodloe. "Tell me, Tom," she begged. "I can bear it."

His lips gave a queer little twitch. "What's that in your hand?"

"A bank-book, I think."

It was a bank-book—"The Fidelity Savings Bank, in account with Miriam Carrington Gray." Tom Goodloe opened it. There were fourteen entries, four of four hundred and thirty-two dollars each, and seven entries of interest at four per cent, compounded semi-annually.

"Miriam, do you know what that old skinflint has been doing—been doing regularly for five years, and we never suspected him?" he asked.

"Miriam's breath came quick. "No—what is it?"

"The rascal! The miser! He has been collecting this interest regularly from your mother, for five years—and putting it in the Savings Bank to *your* credit."

"To *my* credit! But Tom, we've paid it *all*, every year." The girl was completely bewildered.

"Of course, you have—that's where this money came from. He thought your mother would spend it, so he has been giving it to you. Your check is good for—let me see, when we deposit this last one, and compute the interest. On January first, your check will be good for more than twenty-three hundred dol-

lars. Your mother's canceled note is marked 'Paid.' But that is not the trouble. Look!"

The girl was dazed and over-wrought. "Don't keep it from me; I can bear anything, if *you* tell me," she said.

"Yes, old Hedrick says a man can bear and bear until his back breaks. He has laid a heavy burden upon you."

"Upon *me*?"

"Yes. You didn't suppose he was giving you that money for nothing?"

"Then I won't take it. I—" Miriam clenched her brave little hands.

"Wait, dearie; read this." Goodloe handed her the paper which Hedrick had written. Slowly puzzling over the words, Miriam read aloud: "'For and in consideration of one dollar, cash in hand paid, and the further consideration of undischarged personal obligations long due and owing by me to the late Walworth Gray, and the late Thomas Goodloe, I do hereby convey and warrant—'"

"Why, Tom, I never dreamed that Mr. Hedrick owed money to Papa."

"It was not money, dearie. Mr. Hedrick owed no money to your father, or mine. Once I heard him remark that he felt grateful to them both for helping him when he was poor. That must be the 'undischarged personal obligation' of which he speaks in the deed."

"Deed?"

"Yes, deed." Tom crumpled the girl and the paper together, holding them close to him.

"Listen, dearie: Our old friend, whom we never understood, has been thinking for us. This is a deed from Mr. Hedrick, conveying to me the old Goodloe homestead, upon condition that I go into partnership with you."

"Go into partnership with *me*?"

"Yes, and occupy the house at once. You couldn't keep me out of my old home, could you? *Could* you, Miriam?"

"I have always hated for you to live at a boarding house," she whispered.

Miriam couldn't be sure whether she was laughing or crying. Tom only knew that she nestled in his arms, and her face was all a-shine.

The Escape of Bill Newlands

IT requires no elasticity of imagination to see in this author an American who may write for us somewhat in the style of a Maxim Gorky. He has produced a grim story of the relentlessness of fate; a story which chills your blood, but which has the Gorky quality of accuracy of emotion in the human animal. This is Mr. Sprigle's first story. Watch for further work from him. In our estimation, he's a mighty worth-while young writing man.

By Ray Sprigle

"SAY, Jim, what's the time?"
"Half pas' 'leven, Bill."

The "half past eleven" never reached Bill Newlands' brain. In the moment that it impinged on his consciousness it was transformed into "forty-nine hours." A half hour before, when he heard a distant clock, and slowly counted its eleven strokes, the final stroke spelled not the numeral eleven but the numeral forty-nine and one-half.

For now, in just forty-nine hours, five men, one of them a priest, would come for Bill Newlands. They would lead him thirty-five steps down the corridor, twenty-two steps to the right, halt a moment while a little door was unlocked, unbarred, unbolted and unchained; then three steps through, then fifteen steps to the right, one step up and four to the left. Then hands would press him backward until he sat. Then a few seconds' wait and he would be killed. "Electrocuted" was the legal term; "bumped off" was the way Bill phrased it.

Bill Newlands was awaiting execution. Forty-nine hours stood between him and death.

The "Jim," who told him the time, was Jim Elston, prison guard. Death-chamber guards and condemned men do not usually address each other as "Jim" and "Bill," but these two were born inti-

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BY M. LEONE
BRACKER



mates, despite the fact that they had never heard of each other until Newlands entered the death-chamber eight months before.

Elston was "Hell-bender" Elston, who could break a refractory convict's spirit quicker than any other guard in the big prison. He grinned delightedly whenever he had a chance to confess that with his own hands—"no gun, no club"—he had slain four convicts who "got fresh wit' me."

And Newlands was Bill Newlands, gangman, "gun," "peter man," what-not in the world of crime. He had killed a paramour in his younger days, when he was known as a "moll buzzer," because he thought she was "holding out" on him. Now he was awaiting death, not for killing a paramour, but because he became excited one night and foolishly killed a policeman when the bluecoat tried to interfere as he was making his "get-away" from a house he had robbed.

So Newlands was due to die "before sunrise on the tenth of June," which meant, according to precedent, at 12:30 o'clock Saturday morning. Now it was 11:30 o'clock Wednesday night—forty-nine hours' grace.

But Bill Newlands had no intention of dying, at least not so soon and in just that way. He had friends. Witness the "mouthpiece," as Bill inelegantly but not inaptly termed his legal adviser and representative, who had fought for

Bill's life through three courts and the Governor's office, while fees mounted higher each day—and were liquidated each day, too.

But the "mouthpiece" failed. The police department of the city where Bill had ended the career of one of its units, brought every influence possible to bear on the Governor to prevent his granting Bill a pardon or commutation. The police influence swung the blind lady's scales against Bill. And so a "get-away" had been "framed." Newlands was to escape.

NO man can gauge the influence of the politico-crook unless he becomes one himself. There are mysterious forces under the surface of things that reach up out of the "gun joints" and dives of the underworld and unlock prison doors, procure pardons from governors' offices, strangely change the minds of courts and jurors and district attorneys. The only visible evidences of these forces are rat-faced, ferret-like, or big-jowled, jovial attorneys who are always on the verge of disbarment but seldom slip over the brink.

Bill had been a crook for thirty years, since he could toddle, in fact. If those thirty years had done nothing else, they had made him know men. He knew their minds and motives, and he was acquainted with them.

The day after his arrest those mysterious influences began to stretch out invisible tentacles.

There were divers politicians in his home city who owed Bill favors and who feared him too.

There were business men with whom he had been brought into carefully concealed contact in labor troubles.

There was his brother-in-law, a "Flytown" saloon owner and "fence" through whom Bill and his fellows disposed of loot.

There was a wealthy wholesale jeweler who had taken many a consignment of good "stones."

There was a coterie of city and state officials who, if they were not to be influenced by Bill Newlands himself, were to be swayed by those whom Bill could sway.

And so for months the hidden circles widened and widened. All the while Bill lay, first in jail, and then in the penitentiary. But the forces failed. In the court of common pleas, in the court of appeals, in the supreme court, in the executive mansion, they failed. The tentacles were not strong enough to bend the machinery of the law to Bill's escape by legal means.

And yet, Newlands had to escape. Bill could talk. And if he talked, other men, far higher in the social scale than he, might look through bars even as he was doing. He could be trusted to keep silent so long as he was certain of living. But men on the edge of life are prone to talk—and to talk secrets.

SO Bill was to be "sprung." Not with steel files, keen saws, steel-dissolving acid. Men do not escape from the death-chambers of modern penitentiaries with steel. If they escape at all they must do it with a tawnier metal.

Three days before, after the Governor had finally refused to "extend executive clemency" (that was what he said in his official statement to the press), Bill had received a note. A "trusty" had mopped out his cell under the watchful eyes of the captain of guards. The trusty had not taken his hands from the mop-handle while he was in the death-chamber. If he had, he would have gone into "solitary." But the captain of guards did not notice a flick that he gave his mop as he swabbed along the bars in front of Bill's cell. Bill did, though, and when mop and trusty and captain had gone, he picked up a raveled bit of cordage from the mop, dirty and wet. He unraveled it further and a squill of paper lay in his hands.

Mum's the word. We'll spring you.
Thursday night.

Bill's eyes never changed. He yawned and put his hand to his mouth. The note was gone. Bill waited.

The hours crawled slowly, as slowly now that he was waiting for freedom as when he had been waiting for death—for those who tell of the galloping minutes of the condemned speak idly.

Forty-nine, forty-eight, forty-seven; he counted the hours unconsciously until he slept—and began counting them again without a break as he woke.

Thursday night came unmarked. At ten o'clock the guard changed. "Hell-bender" Elston had changed turns with the day guard and had worked straight through Thursday that he might have Thursday night and Friday off, returning in time for the "event" of Saturday morning. Without Jim, the "event" would be seriously disarranged, as it was Jim's hand that consummated these "events." Even most penitentiary guards do not like to kill fellow men whom they owe no grudge.

As Elston walked through the death-chamber on his way to the outer entrance, through which his relief even then was coming, he brushed past Newlands' cell. Bill stood near the cell door.

Elston struck viciously through the bars, his fist failing by an inch to reach Bill's face.

"Wat t'ell yuh mean standin' by the bars w'en I go past? Tryin' to pull somethin'?" he snarled. Bill's muscles gathered for a spring, despite his surprise. Elston and he had maintained a truce founded on mutual respect. Just as his hands flashed to seize the arm extended into his cell, he stopped.

"Go tuh the devil," he growled, and Elston walked on. Bill had sensed that something had left Elston's fist as he lunged, and had fallen without a sound at the back of the cell, in the shadow.

In the recurrent moments when the eyes of the relief guard were not on him, Bill found Elston's missile, a wadding of dirty cotton, just such as might have come from the torn mattress on his cot, and in it a bottle of tablets and a note.

Take the pill marked with the cross in lead pencil. Then drop the others on the floor. It will make you sick but it's not poison. When you get to the hospital look under your mattress. Red-haired screw is safe. Get by the others any way you can. Get over West wall in middle. Coat and hat at bottom. Go to old Molly.

That was all. Bill ate the note and thrust the bottle in his cot.

His lips drew back from his teeth. His eyes narrowed and he breathed like a spent runner.

"Christ! th' yellow—" And his mind sought for the vileness to weight his words. He suddenly stopped and wiped the lines of rage out of his face. The guard had started back past his cell. By the time he had gone, Bill had regained his self-control, but he still trembled.

Minute after minute he sat there, motionless. The trembling stopped by and by but his mind raced on.

"Poison—take the marked one." So this was the way they were going to silence him! If he took it, would he die like a street dog in the pound? Was it on the level?.... God.... he could feel every pulse of his heart thump at his temples.

That poison—it was clever. It was just what he would do if he were in the place of the men who had to keep him from talking. Keep the poor fool silent but see that he was killed just the same. His head ached. Maybe they were "on the square"—but all his mind would bring to him was what he would do if another stood in his place.

And he didn't have much time now. At midnight his cell would be searched, thoroughly. It must be nearly midnight now. He must decide. He thought of the chair. The rope—that was something a man could understand. But this electricity. He had seen a lineman electrocuted once. He remembered how the man's body smoked, up there on the pole.

He would take the marked tablet. It was poison, of course, but he feared it less than the chair. They would never lead him out like a beef in the slaughterhouse and kill him.

He poured out the tablets in his palm. One bore a cross in lead pencil. This he kept. The others he dropped on the cot with the bottle. He closed his eyes while he opened his mouth wide, laid the tablet as far back as he could—and gulped.

A few moments later he blinked his eyes open again. He was standing in the same place. He looked about, dazed. He had expected to drop dead instantly. Then he remembered with a half grin that one didn't die that quickly by the poison route.



He thought of death, of the girl he killed. He wondered if she really did "hold



out" on him from the money she stole, and how it felt to her when he killed her.

He sat down on his cot and tried not to think. But he could not help it. He thought of death—of the girl he killed. He wondered if she really did "hold out" on him from the money she stole, and how it felt to her when he killed her.

He saw the surprised look on the policeman's face as the flash of the close-held pistol lighted it up as he fired. How that black blotch had sprung up in the middle of the red face, like magic. . . . He wished the poison would hurry up and work.

THE guard heard the first paroxysm of nausea and came running, calling to his mate at the far end of the corridor. They sounded the alarm and the night captain burst in. Not until then did they venture into Bill's cell. He was on his cot now, groaning and writhing in torture. The night captain saw the tablets. "The doc; quick!" he rapped out, and one of the guards leaped away.

"The hospital; in a hurry," was the doctor's brief word when he saw Bill, and the tablets and vial in the captain's hand. In the hospital, a red-haired guard pointed to an unoccupied cot and Bill's bearers laid him down. The doctor examined the tablets more closely.

"Hm. Thought so. Arsenic."

In a moment he was at Newlands' side with a mixture which he poured down the condemned man's throat. Then there were more convulsions, and finally Newlands, weak and spent, lay breathing stertorously, but with that gripping pain in his stomach gone.

He had time to think again. Alive! How long, he wondered. Then he thought of the gang that had tried to close his mouth with poison, and the message. He subconsciously slid his hand stealthily under the mattress of his cot.

It was better than a million antidotes, a million restoratives. A moment before he had been waiting for death. Desire, the future, hope—all had fled. He was only so much flesh with a sluggish current of blood in his veins that kept the tide of life from its last ebb. Now he was a man again—his own man, of course.

Slowly his hand traveled about under the mattress. First he felt the butt of a

revolver, an automatic—the kind he was partial to; he had killed the cop with one. He felt a rope, thin and strong. It was wrapped about a hook, a double hook. His way was clear now—after he won free of the hospital.

He took stock of the barriers that lay between him and the outer wall. There was the doctor—a little man. Count him out. It was his business to cure convicts, not prevent their escape. There was the red-haired guard. Bill knew now why the red one had him placed on that particular cot. The two death-chamber guards who had carried him to the hospital had returned to their posts and the night captain who had remained on guard in their absence had come down to the sick ward.

The doctor, the red-haired guard, the night captain! Bill's fist could dispose of the first. The second was "right." Nothing to fear there. If there was, if he should interfere, well, there'd be one less guard in the old prison—until they could hire a new one. The third! There was a more difficult problem—Big John Sommonds, two hundred pounds' of vigor, and a brain old in the conceits of the caged. But there was no time to lose. Sommonds stood over him now, looking down at the white, wan features just beginning to show a touch of color again.

"How'll he come, Doc? Will he make it?" he asked.

"Think so, Cap. We got to him quick. Never can tell about these cons, though. When yuh think yuh've pulled 'em through, they go an' die on yuh an' when yuh've given 'em up to die they'll get well and steal your tobacco. He looks good for the chair, though."

Sommonds turned away from the cot.

Something warned him—that sixth sense that convict keepers and animal tamers have—and he started to whirl on his heel, his hand going to his hip. He never got around. There was a crash of light. He saw the floor, curiously coming nearer—

The hook, driven with all the power of Newlands' great arm, had broken in the side of his skull as if it were an egg. Newlands' spring, which had lifted him from his side to his feet and de-

livered the blow, seemingly with one movement, kept him going. Straight over the body of the night captain he went. Before the puzzled sensory nerves of the doctor could carry warning to his brain, he was lifted as by a cannon-ball and catapulted back among his graduates and bottles.

Newlands turned toward the red-haired guard.

"How about chu?" he demanded, never stopping in his soft-footed rush toward the last of the three barriers, "shall I mark yuh?"

"Go easy about it," was the gasp of pure terror that answered him, and Newlands "marked" him. With a deceptive gentleness, Newlands brought the side of the hook against his head and deftly flicked a bit of scalp out and the red-haired man dropped back on the floor as a suit of empty clothes would fall. It had taken Bill ten years to learn that blow, always to be sure of it. A man has to learn it. One doesn't want to have to kill every unfortunate whose "roll" he covets, and besides, a live victim with an aching head is far less likely to stir the police to activity than a stiff white body on a morgue slab.

In a trice Newlands had Sommonds' coat and cap off the limp form and on himself. The long club he took too. He thrust the hook and rope under his coat and gripped the automatic.

Straight through the almost empty hospital ward he went. If one or two pairs of eyes turned to follow him, they were the eyes of wise men who loved life, even as convicts. They made no sound.

It was easy to unlock the single plank door that separated the hospital from the great quadrangle or prison yard, surrounded on three sides by the cell houses and on the fourth by a wall twenty-five feet high, topped by spikes and broken glass, except for a narrow pathway where, every ten minutes, a guard walked, rifle ready for use.

He slowed his run when he reached the outer air. No moon; good! Slowly he walked, keeping in the shadow, up to the corner formed by the walls of the cell house, and then along the long wall to the other corner formed by the cell house and the outer wall. Once a guard looked

from the wall, saw the glint of brass button and shield on cap, and called:

"'Lo, Cap."

"'Lo, Fred," called Newlands, as he slipped his finger about the trigger of his gun, chewing the "Fred," so that it might have been anything. The guard kept on. Newlands, with his heart beating until it threatened to burst his arteries, never hastened his step, never looked back.

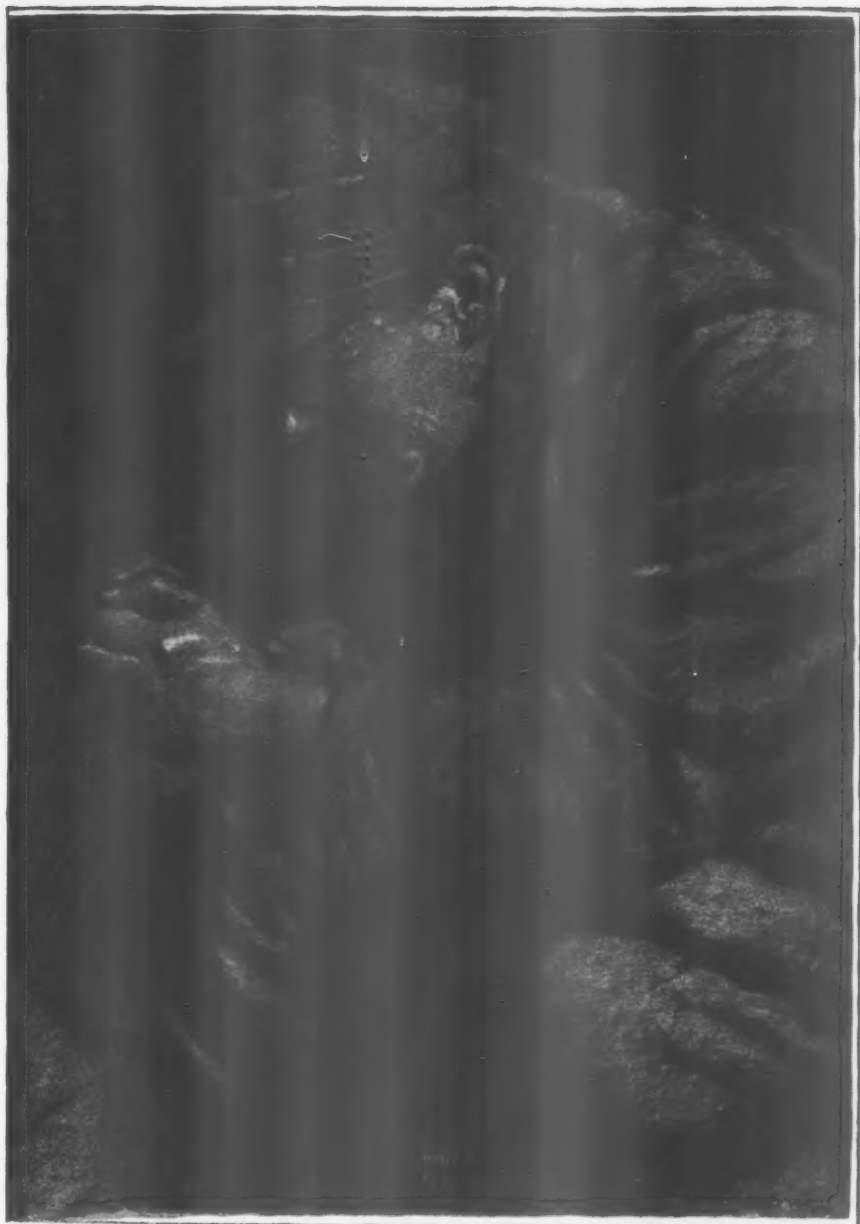
Now he came to the wall. He turned and walked along the rough, gray barrier. At last, the middle! Softly he unwound the rope from the hook. He stepped back a pace. He waited. In the railroad yards, across the street, on the other side of the wall, a switching engine snorted noisily. He cast the hook high in the air, toward the top of the wall. It grated a moment as he pulled and then he felt the rope give in his hands. He saw the hook hurtling toward him and blindly grasped. It was a foot from the ground when his hand stopped its drop. A foot more and it would have clattered on the flags and brought every guard on the wall hotfoot, despite its careful wrapping. Again he stepped back and again he waited. Again the kindly engine snorted. He cast again, steadily and unhurriedly. He pulled on the rope. This time it held. A quick glance up and down the wall. No sentry in sight.

Up—up—up! His arms were pulling from their sockets. The sweat dripped in his eyes and blinded him. His tortured lungs throbbed like a living flame in his heaving breast. The nausea from the two powerful emetics began anew.

Up—up—up. It was a lifetime of effort to get one hand over the other. It was a corner section of hell to unwrap the paralyzed hand and take a fresh grip. It was the torture of the damned to lift his heavy body by the aching hands and arms and shoulders.

Up—up—up. It seemed that he had been on the rope hours and had hardly moved a foot. He wanted to let go his hold and fall back. Anything was better than this awful effort. He tried to open his hands but they refused. His hands were pulling him up now. He





Nearly a year in prison, in a dirty, narrow cell. A comfortless, joyless year, mused Newlands. Before him, danger and discomfort and cheerlessness of the life of a fugitive. The perfume brought it all back—a woman's smile, a woman's lips, a woman's arms.

didn't want to go up. He wanted to let go and drop back.

One hand slipped up, up, higher. It gripped the hook. The top! He drew himself up with the last ounce of effort in his body. He lay across the wall gasping. But just for a moment. He pulled the rope, turned the hook and dropped the rope on the other side. The glass cut his hands and gashed his abdomen.

He slipped over the edge of the wall. He tried to go slowly. Down, five feet, ten feet—then he went with a rush, the rope burning through the bleeding hands. He rolled out on the sidewalk.

Anything in all the world except an escaping convict would have been through—beaten. Not Newlands. He was on his feet again in a moment. He felt his pocket, found the gun safely there, walked along the sod between the foot of the wall and the sidewalk and stumbled over a package his fumbling hands missed. Unrolled, it became a raincoat, long and concealing, and a felt hat. He rolled up the night captain's blood-stained cap and coat and put on the raincoat and hat.

A second later a cloaked form slipped over the embankment that cut the railroad yards from the street. An hour later "Old Molly," Molly Halpin, daughter of a convict, wife of a convict, mother of two convicts, opened the door of her hovel to that same form.

Neither said a word. Molly pointed to the back room. There was a dirty suit, a derby hat, underwear and a dinner pail, and a fire burning in the stove despite the soft June night. Quickly the raincoat and felt hat went into the stove. The striped trousers and prison shirt and underwear followed. Bill put on the suit laid out for him. In a trousers pocket he found a roll of money. He counted it. One hundred dollars. "Tightwads," he muttered. Inside the roll was a note.

Its up to you. Go while the goings good. Go South. Its the last place they'll look. Get to Galveston and ship with the cattle to Europe. Your a goner if your nabbed.

No more. No signature.

Bill looked at the roll, threw the note in the stove, and spat. Without a word

he passed the old woman in the front room. She did not look up. The door closed behind him.

Swinging his dinner pail, he walked boldly down the middle of the road. He was on his way to the station, where he could get one of the early work trains to Chester, where the great steel works called thousands of workers. On the train, no different from fellow passengers, all steel workers, he would be unnoticed. At Chester he could board a freight or pay his way South.

A taxicab whirled past him as he walked. He heard a woman's shrill laugh but scarcely heeded it. But the odor! His nostrils worked over it uneasily. Strong, pungent, cheap, it put to rout even the fumes of the burned gasoline of the car, and left behind a trail of suggestive sweetness—perfume.

Nearly a year in prison, in a dirty, narrow cell. A comfortless, joyless year, mused Newlands. Before him, danger and discomfort and cheerlessness of the life of a fugitive.

The perfume brought it all back—a woman's smile, a woman's lips, a woman's arms. He would have them once more despite all the prisons and police and death-chambers in this world or hell.

He was almost to the station and the early morning work train. He walked more slowly. He stopped. He turned and retraced his steps.

Rain began to fall.

A HUGE old rookery of a building with a garish electrically lighted front that hid the squalor and dinginess and age like the paint of a courtesan, an imitation marble newel post and a broken Cupid holding a broken cluster of lights. Lights showing through transoms, the rustle of cards, the click of celluloid chips, snatches of music: a cheap theatrical boarding house.

Bill stopped a woman as she was entering her room.

"Where's Millie?" he demanded.

"Millie who?"

"D'Armand," he supplied laconically.

"Oh, upstairs. Top floor, back." Bill began the climb.

He smiled as he went up. Millie was

a foolish kid. She was in the rear row of a "turkey" burlesque show when Bill met her. They corresponded desultorily for a while and then she left the show and came to Bill. She amused him.

The burlesque wheels are no places for weaklings but sometimes the weaklings do manage to cling as they revolve. Millie did. The hardness of her world, the bitterness and rottenness she was dragged through or dragged herself through, failed to change her softness, to stiffen her helplessness. She was softer stuff than Bill usually picked for his lights o' love. She wanted to be good. She was good—so far as she could be. He smiled again as he thought of her.

She had gone out with a show when Bill was arrested. Her salary since then had bought his tobacco and dainties. A month before his escape she had received "her notice" and had come back to the capitol to be near Bill. She was a good kid, he reflected.

He tried the door. It was locked.

"Who's there?" demanded a sleepy feminine voice.

"Me. Open up," he demanded gruffly.

A gasp, and the key grated in the lock. Bill slipped inside. He grasped her in his bandaged hands. The great paws tightened on her bare arms. Bruises would show in the morning.

"Bill? Bill?" She could only gasp his name questioningly. He told her in a few muttered sentences.

Then—

"Girl!" he cried huskily. And again, "Girl!" This was his woman.

IT was nearly noon when Bill left the boarding house. It was almost as dark as when he had entered. The rain had grown into a driving storm. Wires were down. Traffic was suspended. The streets were almost deserted. He plodded through the rain, conspicuous now, because he was alone on the street. Pedestrians huddled in doorways, watched him. He pulled the derby as low over his brow as he could and wished for the felt hat.

In the doorway of Bill Fraley's saloon, one of a group started as he saw

the lone figure crossing the street. The man of the doorway ran toward Bill, reaching under his arm as he went. Bill turned and saw him. He knew; it was Spike Nolan, of the "front office."

Bill dodged into an alley on the other side of the street. A bullet followed him. Down the alley a block, he went, Nolan after him, firing as he ran. A uniformed policeman joined the detective.

Two guns were spitting bullets at Bill's heels now. He fired back. The uniformed man stopped. He smiled foolishly, whirled, fell flat on his face, quivered once, and lay still.

Still Nolan came on, firing. Bill felt a blow on his arm as if a club had fallen on it. He dropped his gun and wasted a precious second as he stopped to pick it up with his left hand. He fired again.

Bill slipped into the open door of a stable and turned and hooked the door. He waited in the stable. He heard Nolan's shoulder strike the door. The fugitive fired through the door, once, twice, and heard Nolan cough gurglingly, curse, choke. He walked on through the stable to the front door, stepped through, closed the door, snapped the padlock he found hanging to the staple. He entered the back door of a grocery, walked on through, nodded nonchalantly to a clerk standing in the front doorway, watching the rain. Bill walked on out, across the street, down a side street, toward the station and the railroad yards. He crossed the street again.

In the middle of the car tracks was a puddle of water. Bill leaped but splashed into its far edge. There was a blinding flash. A heavy wire, lying with its end in the puddle, sprang into life. Blue flame ran over the surface of the water and over Bill, lying motionless in the puddle.

The wire lay quiet again. The blue flame flashed no more. A little wisp of smoke rose from the form that had been Bill Newlands, and eddied in the dying wind. The form did not move.

It was half a dozen hours later than the hour the judge had named for a current of electricity to stop the career of Bill Newlands, but the result was just the same.

"Romance," Mr. Sprigle's second story, will be in the July Red Book Magazine, on the news-stands June 23rd.

The Pool- Ball

ONE of Kennett Harris' inimitable stories from down Missouri way.

THE Plummer gals, Clarissa and Beulah, and their visiting cousin Pauline from Westboro' were out in the front yard under the shade of the big maple when Jefferson Gooch drove up. The three were quartering and stoning peaches for drying, chattering as they worked, sixty to the minute, laughing almost as much as they talked and screaming now and then, not unmusically, when some uncommonly bold yellow-jacket intruded too closely on their operations. A pretty enough picture they made in their light dresses, apron-girt and with sleeves uprolled, a heaping basket of the luscious fruit beside them and the rich green of the grass under their slippered feet helping the composition materially. Jefferson had business on hand at his father's farm, a mile and a half beyond, but he stopped. He was in his mid-twenties and human. And there was this new Westboro' girl.

"Mercy sakes alive!" ejaculated

"I reckon I'll be around by the time you get primped up, Miss Pauline."

buxom Clarissa, "if here haint Jeff!"

"Jeff, come here," called her no less buxom sister plaintively. "They're abusing of me and I need he'p."

Jeff sauntered up in the leisurely manner that was habitual with him. A good-looking young fellow, rather inclined to plumpness, with blue eyes and a clear pink face that was a shade pinker than usual, perhaps on account of the sun, for he showed no other sign of embarrassment at the sight of the fair stranger. He was dressed in work-a-day jeans and wore a broad-brimmed straw hat that had seen service. Smiling at Beulah





By Kennett Harris

Author of "Turn and
Turn About," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY
WILLIAM
VAN DRESSER

and, in her turn, held out a peach-pulpy hand that Jeff this time innocently took—and instantly relinquished. A peal of joyous laughter from the sisters followed, and the West-boro' cousin looked up with mock concern, and then gave a genuine gasp of astonishment. Jeff had doffed his straw hat in acknowledgment of the introduction, and the entire top of his head

"I don't aim to do any primping," retorted Pauline saucily.

with an engaging amiability of expression, he declined the dripping fingers that she mischievously extended.

"My hands haint fitten," he explained. "They've had soap and water onto 'em not four hours sence. Howdy, Clarissy."

"Howdy, Jeff," returned the girl, and then, with a prim affectation of politeness, "This here is Cousin Pauline Cary. Pauline, le' me make known to you Mr. Jefferson Gooch."

The cousin from Westboro' courtesied slightly, dropped her eyes demurely,

gleamed in a checkered patch of sunlight, pink as his face, wholly and uncompromisingly bald.

The next moment the unseemly nakedness was covered and the young man was chuckling pleasantly, as he wiped his hand on Beulah's apron.

"That's what a man gets for being too trustful of a gal," he observed. "On'y, most ginerally, he gets worse," he added, seating himself on the grass. "I reckon I'll keep my eye on you from this on, Miss Pauline."

He kept both eyes on her as he spoke, and if he had been an Argus, ninety-nine would have been too few by one for such pleasing employment. Pauline Cary certainly did Westboro' credit, in point of looks. In contrast to her cousins, she was slender and dark, with a far from attenuated slenderness and a brilliant and most attractive darkness. Not even the frizzed bang that she wore could spoil the beauty of her abundant and glossy hair, and, if color was wanting in her slightly olive complexion, her skin was of an exquisitely smooth texture and there was color enough in her lips. When she smiled, which was often, her small, milk-white teeth added to an effect that was positively dazzling. Jeff looked at her long and frequently.

Pauline, although her inspection was femininely furtive, regarded Mr. Gooch with particular attention from time to time, and wonderingly. The pink, boyish-looking face, unlined, except by the fine "good-natured wrinkles" at the corners of his eyes, his well-shaped mouth, rounded chin, full throat and smooth, unknuckled hands were all of youth, and personable youth. The inclination to plumpness already noted was obviously congenital, and symmetrically distributed. It seemed impossible that—

It wasn't. It was a fact—a bare fact! Jeff took off his hat again and wiped that shining cranium without the least embarrassment.

"It's cert'n'y a heap of trouble," he said, soberly, "but I'm right accommodating by spells, and I'm willing for to undertake it. The mare needs exercising anyway, and sence Clarissy mittened me I haint had no use for the buggy. I reckon I'll be around by the time you get primped up, Miss Pauline."

"I don't aim to do any primping," retorted Pauline, saucily.

"Me mittened him!" exclaimed Clarissa. "I wish he'd give me a chance to mitten him. Pauline, I haint never had a ride in that buggy yit—not to say a ride."

"Nor me," chimed in Beulah, indignantly. "All right for you, Jeff Gooch!"

Jeff chuckled, jumped to his feet and, for the third time, removed his hat.

"Fare-ye-well, ladies," he said. "I'm

going for to leave you now. Miss Pauline, I reckon after all there wont be no time for you to primp. You'll do, the way you are, 'sfar's I'm concerned, and I don't aim to take you where any other feller will see you—not if I kin he'p it."

With which, the young man departed hastily and, jumping into his wagon, stood upright like a Roman charioteer and urged his horses to a lumbering gallop.

Beulah heaved a profound sigh as soon as he was out of sight. "That cert'n'y settles my chances," she said soulfully. She waved her hand at the diminishing dust-cloud. "Fare-ye-well, Jeff, dear! All I ask of you, Pauline, is that you'll treat him kind."

"Laid herse'f out for to do it!" accused Clarissa, dramatically. "Snapped him up like a hoppy-toad ketching a fly! The onliest beau we had to our names, too, and she our blood-kin!"

Pauline showed some confusion, but she rallied and tossed her head. "I reckon you haint no need for to fret yourse'ves," she said, and in such a tone that the sisters looked at her in surprise.

"Don't you like him, honey?" asked Beulah, clearly disappointed.

"Oh, he's right nice," Pauline answered, indifferently.

"He cert'n'y is," declared Clarissa, with some warmth. "I thought, from the way you acted—Ouch! go way, you mis'able, buzzing thing!" She waved her knife at a wasp.

"If you want a beau—" Beulah began.

"If I did, I'd choose one that wasn't —" Pauline hesitated, then she laughed and, with a drolly defiant look at her cousins, sang:

He had no ha'r on the top of his haid,
The place whar the wool ought to
grow, grow, grow!

"A person kin look at the top of his haid and see what he's thinking of."

"You wouldn't see no mean thoughts," Beulah retorted.

"Land o' Mercy!" ejaculated Clarissa. "That! Well, co'se he is right bare, but I'd never have thought of it. Well, I'll tell him he don't need for to waste no time on you after this."

"Don't you dare to say one word, Clarissy Plummer, or I'll never forgive you," said Pauline eagerly. "I done told you I thought he was right nice and—"

A snapping noise behind her made her stop. Another young man—a moon-faced, hulking fellow with a fluff of unshaven whisker, a "hired hand" on the Plummer place—had come up and was standing half hidden by the trunk of the maple, his attitude one of attention.

"Well?" queried Beulah, sharply.

"Don't you want me to take these yere and spread 'em?" asked the young man, grinning and indicating the kettles of stoned peaches.

"No, I don't," Beulah answered, "but I'd like for you to go tell Paw that he wants you."

"You reckon he does?" grinned the young man.

"I reckon we don't," retorted Beulah, and the young man, finding no sympathy in the glances of the other girls, sniggered and shambled away.

AT the appointed time, and a little before Pauline had made the suggested changes and additions to her toilet, a high-headed, high-stepping and shiny-coated mare attached to a smart little side-bar buggy trotted up to the front gate. In due course, which might have been sooner, the three girls appeared, and, amid much merriment, the young man separated Pauline, lifted her deftly into the buggy and drove off.

It was past supper-time when they returned, and Jeff declined a cordial invitation to put up his horse and stay. But—if Miss Pauline hadn't nothing better to do to-morrow afternoon, why there was a right smart more of the country to see and he would cert'n'y be on hand, like a sore thumb. Why yes, he'd fix it so's he could stay after that. Bring the banjo along? Why yes, he'd do that too.

It appeared that Pauline had nothing better to do, although she looked doubtfully at her cousins and murmured something about the peaches. But she was reassured and urged sufficiently to accept Mr. Gooch's invitation.

"He wasn't so turr'ble tiresome, was

he, honey?" asked Beulah, when the three were making their night toilets in the big, double-bedded room.

"Not so turr'ble," Pauline acknowledged, bending and throwing her hair forward. From behind that lustrous veil she questioned, in her turn.

"I reckon he's quite a beau around here?"

"Not partickeler," replied Beulah, with a meaning smile at her sister. "I reckon he could be, if he wanted, but I don't call to mind as he ever took any-buddy riding twicet running. Seems like he's right choice of that rig of hisn. It's too bad he haint kivered up more on top!"

Pauline tossed her abundant tresses back. "Well, he kep' his hat on all the time," she laughed.

THE next evening there was something in the nature of a function at the Plummer mansion. When Pauline and Jeff returned from their ride they found, sitting on the porch, Rufus Blinn and Dan Treadwell, suitors, respectively, of Beulah and Clarissa, together with Orlando Fenwick, an unattached young farmer from Nishnabotna way. The young men were shaved to the quick and crackled at every movement, owing to the extreme starchiness of their linen; but they moved little and spoke less, until the call came for supper. Then it was seen that the long table in the big kitchen was supplemented by two short ones, the division being concealed by snowy cloths, whereon were lavishly spread the savory substantial and palate-titillating delicacies of Missouri farm housekeeping—a prodigal, all-embracing appeal to appetite, a flaunting and reckless defiance of dyspepsia such as could be found nowhere else on the face of this fertile and abundant earth. There were no courses then to perplex hungry expectancy, no tantalizing surprises of preferred viands in the face of repletion. Everything was set on in delightful promiscuity, so that the gloating eye could wander casually from floured steak to fried chicken and home-cured ham, or from custard pie to apple and thence to the layer-cakes, the devil's food and cookies, noting by the way the

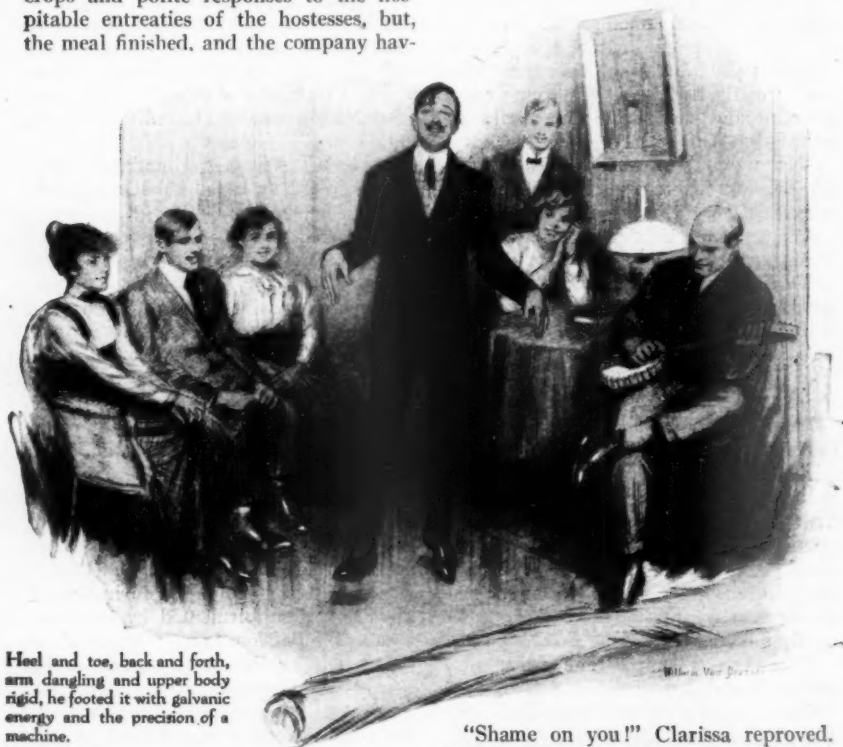
crab jell, delicately flavored with rosegeranium leaf, the plum jell and all the other jells, jams and sweet pickles that the culinary genius of the Plummer household had devised and created, thereby enabling the happy rustic epicure properly to select and plan his devastation in advance.

There was not much conversation then, beyond fragmentary discussion of crops and polite responses to the hospitable entreaties of the hostesses, but, the meal finished, and the company hav-

in the deathless "I Saw the Ship," with facetious variations anent an adventurous rooster and an ill-bred grasshopper. The Nishnabotna man then brought his bass to bear on "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep" and went to absolutely sunless depths in it.

"Your turn, Pauline," said Clarissa.

"Sho! I caint sing," Pauline protested.



Heel and toe, back and forth, arm dangling and upper body rigid, he footed it with galvanic energy and the precision of a machine.

ing adjourned to the parlor, the ceremonious stiffness gradually wore off. There was music and—meaning no invidious distinction—singing. Both the Plummer girls had melodious voices and the Nishnabotna man proved to be the possessor of a profound bass. There was an organ of the early Saxon style of architecture, in walnut, and Beulah played on it very nicely. They sang "The Spanish Cavalier," "The Gypsy's Warning," "Juanita" and "Gaily the Troubadour," and their voices blended

"Shame on you!" Clarissa reproved. "If I could sing like you, nobuddy wouldn't have to ask me twicet."

"Little birds whut kin sing and wont sing, ought for to be made to sing," said the Nishnabotna man.

"What was that you was singing yis-tiddy?" Clarissa asked, maliciously. "There was an ol' darky—"

Pauline jumped up quickly, with more than a touch of red on her smooth olive cheeks. "I'll sing 'Belle Mahone,'" she volunteered, almost breathlessly, and, standing by the organ with her hands loosely clasped behind her, she sang it.

Jeff, sitting back in a corner, felt a clutching at his throat and an itching of the bridge of his nose, though he had supposed sentimentality to be foreign to his nature. But who could resist the pathos of that plaintive air, sung by such a voice! There was the heartbreak of the ages in it, the grief and desolation of all bereaved lovers.

By the grave I weep, good-by;
Hear, oh hear my lonely cry!
Oh, without thee, what am I?

Jeff could quite easily imagine himself weeping over a grave that held the remains of his inamorata—quite! He knew jist how the feller would feel.

"SHUCKS! I caint—" Jeff began.

But they set on him, dragged him from his dim corner and thrust the banjo into his hands; whereupon, after a brisk and certain twisting of pegs, the room was suddenly filled with a marvelous twanging, harsh and barbaric, but in the perfection of time: a swift staccato that set the blood a-tingling and feet and hands patting to the resonant throb of the strings; an old hoedown, the granddaddy of jig tunes, rhythm supreme, triumphant and compelling. He cert'n'y could pick on that old banjo, could Jeff.

"Yip!" from Rufus Blinn, "Yip!" from Dan Treadwell, and a louder and shriller "Yip!" from the Nishnabotna man. Pauline's little hands and feet were patting with the rest and the red had come into her cheeks again as she stared with bright, dilated eyes at the performer.

"Yip!" again from Fenwick, who started up and, kicking a circular rag rug out of his way, began to dance. Heel and toe, back and forth, arm dangling and upper body rigid, he footed it with galvanic energy and the precision of a machine, leap, stamp, shuffle, double-shuffle and stamp again, while the perspiration dripped from his stolid face and long strands of his sleek black hair fell over his eyes. A final caper and a final stamp, as Jeff's palm fell, muting the strings, and then, breathless and grinning, and ducking to the plaudits of the company, he staggered back to his chair.

"That sholy was dancing!" declared Jeff, admiringly.

"Well, when they ask the fancy dancers to step to the front I don't most ginerally have to take a back seat," admitted Fenwick. "You throwed me out, though, oncet," he added with a frown.

"I'm apt to," Jeff owned, amiably and ambiguously. "Yit I didn't aim for to do it then." For all his pleasant manner he felt unaccountably irritated. This Nishnabotna feller had a mighty uppity way with him.

Fenwick turned to Pauline. "There's a-going to be a dance day after tomorrow 'night at Eli Straik's," he informed her. "I lay a wager you kin dance. Whether or no, I'd be proud for to beau you there, if you'll honor me."

Pauline hesitated and there Jeff broke in. "Too late, Mister Man," he said, cheerfully. "I'm afore you." He looked at Pauline, appealingly, but just then Beulah giggled and the devil of contrariety entered into her cousin.

"I reckon you're mistaken," she told Jeff, icily. To the Nishnabotna man she said, with a gracious smile, "I'll be pleased."

"I 'lowed you wasn't bespoke, because Eli and me on'y jist fixed it up," Fenwick commented, drily.

"Well, I reckon I *was* mistaken," Jeff admitted, dolefully. "I figured on Miss Pauline standing by me, but if she wont, all I kin do is hang my harp on a willer tree and do some more figuring."

"It was me you bespoke, Jeff," volunteeered Clarissa.

"I reckon *you're* mistaken this time," said Dan Treadwell, with exaggerated gruffness.

"Pile it on," sighed Jeff; "I'm used to having my feelings tromped on." He strummed his banjo and began to sing:

No one to love—
None to caress!

At which there was a general laugh, and all of them, except Fenwick, joined in the lugubrious chorus. He sat and, twirling an end of his mustache, smiled most unpleasantly.

But a little later, when Jeff sat re-

tired in his corner, Pauline came to him and stood by his side a moment, nervously twirling a half-blown rose that had fallen from her hair. The young man looked up at her with an expression at once grave and good-humored.

"I was real mean to you about that dance," Pauline murmured, penitently. "I—I'm sorry."

Jeff's face lighted up. "Why gal, there haint nothing to feel sorry about," he said. "I was jist too brash, that's all."

"Will you be to the dance?" she asked in the same undertone.

Jeff reached and took the rose from her yielding fingers. "I reckon you haint got no use for this," he said. "Yes, indeedy! I cert'n'y will be there. I'll be on hand like—like a sore thumb."

JEFF went home that night in an exalted frame of mind, with the rose carefully nursed in the breast pocket of his coat. He slept little. Yet there were long periods of time when the thought of 'Lando Fenwick worried him. He was a right likely 'pearing feller, 'Lando was, daggone him! And there wasn't no need of Pauline accepting of his company if she hadn't wanted to. Even if she had been miffed, brashness or otherwise, why, there wasn't no need of that. And when it come to being brash, a feller'd have to be some to lay over that conceity ape, Fenwick. Yit, seemed like women-folks cottoned to such.

On the other hand, he took comfort, and more than comfort, in recollection of the way Pauline looked at him when she told him that she was sorry. Like a naughty little gal, she acted—'sif she'd been at the cooky jar, but knowed there'd be a petting to follow the scolding. Not edzackly like a little gal either, for there was woman in her eyes—woman grown—when he took the rose from her. And that quick, warm pressure of her hand when he went away—what did that mean?

After breakfast next morning, Jeff drove to Fairfax and made some unusual purchases, including a cake of scented soap, a bottle of violet ink, a necktie of right tasty pattern, a pair of smoke-tan buckskin gloves and dress boots with morocco tops. He was trying

on the boots when Shann, the butcher, who was contentedly waiting his turn, remarked that Doc Basswick was fixing up a cure for bald haid.

"What's he a-going to cure bald haid of, Bob?" inquired Jim Allen, the storekeeper, jocosely.

"Bunions," replied Shann, and then went on to estimate. "He's putting up ten gallon to start weth, and he allows he'll get a dollar for a pint bottle. That'll be eighty dollars for the ten gallon, and I lay eight gallon is jist common, ord'nary rain-water."

A moon-faced, hulking young fellow who was lounging by the cracker barrel, sniggered appreciatively, and, as the storekeeper walked away, followed by Shann, he sniggered again with even greater relish.

"You'd better get you some of that there cure of Doc's," he remarked to Jeff.

Jeff looked up and recognized the young man as a hireling of Plummer's. "Me?" he said, good-naturedly, "Oh, I reckon not. I'm plugging along tol'able well without it."

"I don't know as you are, and I reckon you haint," returned the young man, grinning. "I could tell you something."

"You look 'sif you was busting weth it," remarked Jeff. "Ease the cork out keerful and let it come."

"It's about that gal at Plummer's," said the young man, with a wider grin still. "The other day, after you was there, I heered 'em—Beulah and Clarissy and this yere Pauline—talking about you."

Jeff examined a boot-strap with particular attention and slightly knitted his brows.

"And Pauline—he, he!—Pauline, she says, 'Him!' says she, 'I reckon not,' she says; 'when I pick a beau, it's going to be somebuddy what's got something for to kiver his haid 'sides his hat. He haint no wool on the top of his haid, the place where the wool ought to grow, grow, grow.' Sung it, she did. He, he! And, says she, 'A body kin tell what he's thinking, jist by looking at the top of his haid.' Ho, ho, ho!"

Jeff had pulled on the second boot.

He flexed his foot a moment, meditatively, and then got up and, taking the young man by the arm, led him toward the door.

"What are you a-going for to do?" asked the young man, a little uneasiness mingled with his mirth.

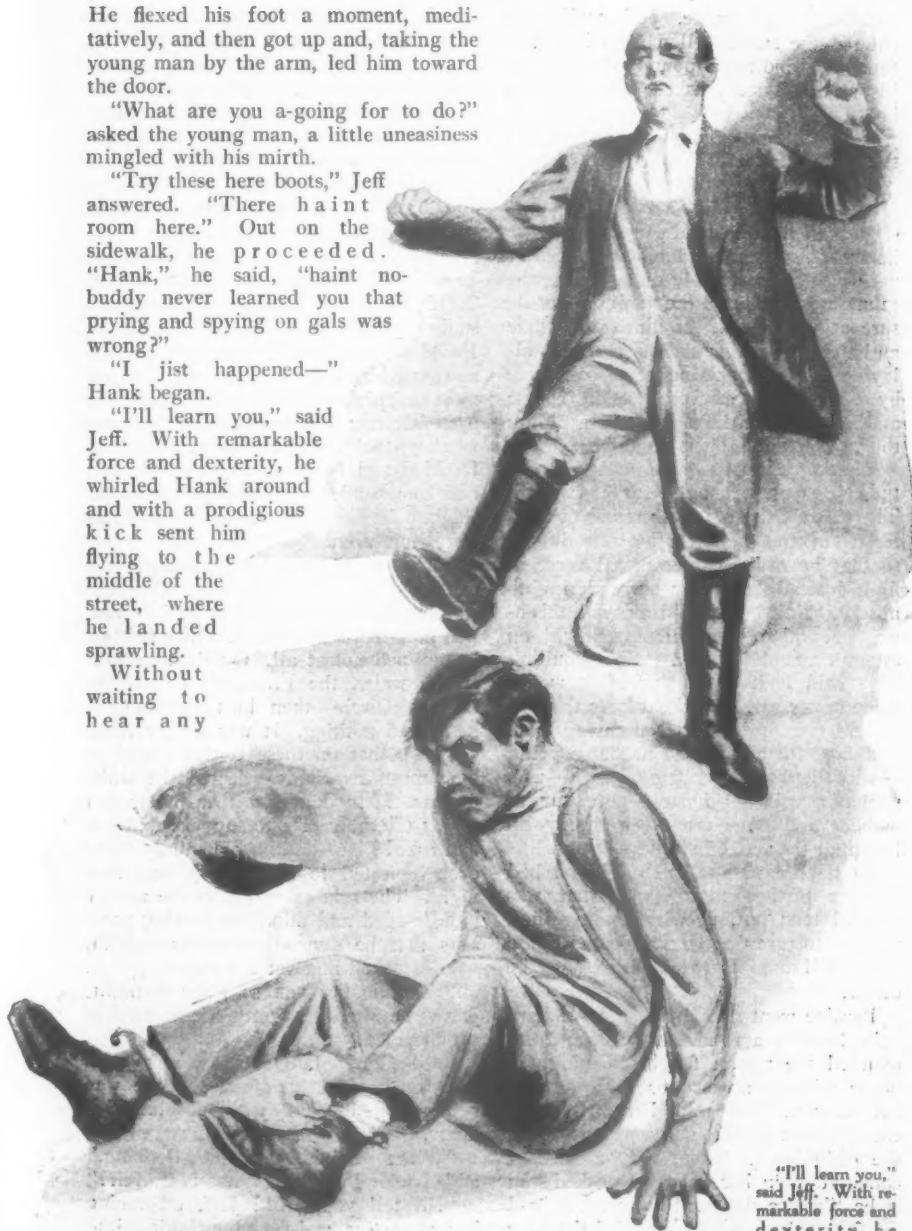
"Try these here boots," Jeff answered. "There haint room here." Out on the sidewalk, he proceeded.

"Hank," he said, "haint no-buddy never learned you that prying and spying on gals was wrong?"

"I jist happened—" Hank began.

"I'll learn you," said Jeff. With remarkable force and dexterity, he whirled Hank around and with a prodigious kick sent him flying to the middle of the street, where he landed sprawling.

Without waiting to hear any



"I'll learn you," said Jeff. With remarkable force and dexterity, he whirled Hank around and with a prodigious kick sent him flying to the middle of the street, where he landed sprawling.

possible remonstrance, Jeff coolly re-entered the store. Allen, who had just finished grinding a pound of coffee in his new red mill, asked him how the boots fit.

"Tol'rabable well, and I'll take 'em, but the soles is too light," said Jeff.

JEFF mechanically stowed his purchases in the road-cart and drove home, passing the Plummer place, of necessity, but resolutely disregarding the glimmer of white on the veranda, hardly sure of it, indeed. At dinner he made an heroic but ineffectual effort to eat, allying Mrs. Gooch's maternal solicitude by pleading overindulgence in cheese and crackers at the store, and escaping to the fields as soon as might be.

The work was a relief and the solitude, in some sort, balm for his wound. The first shock of the thing was over, at least, and the pain for the time dulled, so that he could gather moral force to fight instead of basely surrendering to misery. "Maybe it's jist as well this-away as another," he soliloquized, with an attempt at philosophy. "She wouldn't have said it if she'd s'posed it would come to my ears, but she'd have thought it, and then if I'd gone on caring more and more for her—like I nachally would—why then, stid of getting over it—as I nachally will—I'd have got sour as clabber and gone around weth my lip hanging, the rest of my days."

So he braced up, finely. If he had another restless night, why that was natural too; but, notwithstanding that, and the torture that he anticipated in the sight of 'Lando Fenwick, he went to the dance.

Pauline went straight to him—radiant being!—with a confident smile and demanded the reason for his passing the house without a word or look the day before, and Jeff told her, truthfully enough, that he had not seen her, which she disbelieved. Then, with a note of conciliation in her voice, she asked him if he liked to dance. She loved it, and the floor was elegant. She tried the floor with her prettily shod foot and looked up at him, invitingly.

"I reckon I'll jist look on to-night," said Jeff, and there was something bitter

in his tone, so that, after an uneasy pause, the smile faded from her face—to flash up again most brilliantly as the Nishnabotna man came up and asked for the honor of the quadrille just forming. "If Mr. Gooch haint afore me," he added, with something of a sneer.

"Not this time," said Jeff, soberly, and, Pauline graciously consenting, Fenwick triumphantly led her away.

PERHAPS Jeff would not have danced if it had not been for that brilliant smile and the way Pauline leaned on Fenwick's arm, and if there had not been a repeated and peremptory call for "one more couple wanted." As it was, he presently met Minna Knowlton's somewhat wistful look. Minna was angular, freckled and featured unpleasingly, and had come under the escort of an inconsiderate brother, wherefore her chances were right slim.

"One more couple!" shouted the caller.

Jeff advanced, begged to be honored, was honored, and danced. Once started, he stopped not at all. Quadrille, schottische, waltz, the Fireman's dance, the Sicilian Circle—then in their vogue—he missed nothing. It was a peculiarity of Jeff's that on these festive occasions he almost invariably selected the wall-flowers. If he danced with a pretty girl it was tolerably safe to suppose that she had asked him—and no blooming beauty ever hesitated to ask. So it was that night. The sole exception to the run of middle-aged and middling-looking partners that he danced with was Beulah, who captured him for a waltz.

"What makes you so glum to-night, Jeff?" inquired his pretty friend, as they promenaded.

"Me glum?" Jeff's surprise was genuine, for he had imagined that he was conducting himself with absolute hilarity.

"When nobuddy haint looking," added wise Beulah. "What is it, Jeff?"

"I'll tell you," said Jeff, embracing her attractive waist and swinging into the dance. "I was askeered that you wasn't a-goin to dance weth me. But I feel a heap better now."

"Huh!" ejaculated Beulah, wrinkling

her nose contemptuously. "I allowed you knew I was a friend of yours. But it's all right."

By which, of course, she meant that it was all wrong, and that she resented his lack of confidence. The same night, or rather at an early hour of the morning, when the swains had departed and the three girls had begun the "talking-over" that is almost the best part of a dance, Beulah attacked the cause of the trouble—directly, as she generally spoke.

"What's the matter weth you and Jeff, Pauline?"

Pauline raised her eyebrows. "Seems like he's miffed about something," she replied. "I s'pose he didn't like me going weth Mr. Fenwick. But if he don't like it, he kin lump it. I haint fretting."

"Not when folks is looking, anyway," commented Beulah, and added, "You didn't get him when it come 'ladies' choice,' did you?"

"I didn't aim for to get him," declared Pauline.

"Cert'n'y you didn't. You was jist walking tords him by accident when Minna Knowlton got apast you and tuk him."

"I wasn't," Pauline flashed out. "I mean—" She set her lips tightly.

"You mean you'd ruther have had 'Lando," pursued Beulah, relentlessly.

"Cert'n'y, I would," Pauline replied, with emphasis. "I jist despise your Mr. Jefferson High'n'mighty Gooch and I think 'Lando Fenwick is a right nice gentleman and an elegant dancer. So there, Miss Beulah Plummer! And I'm—I'm a-going ho-ome!"

"Oh, honëy, hesh!" cried Beulah, remorsefully, patting her cousin's slim, heaving shoulders. "I was jist a-trying to plague you. I'm right sorry, Pauline—honest!"

IT was in an idly inquiring spirit that Jeff strolled into Cal Phinney's barber shop one morning. Cal, who was one of the incorrigible wags of the village, greeted him with characteristic humor. "Want a hair-cut?" he asked.

"That's an unnecessary question," replied Jeff, as he removed his collar. "You don't s'pose I want you to bite it off, do you? See that them shears of

yours is in shape, and part it in the middle when you're through."

A minute or two later he murmured through the lather, "What do you think of this yer hair remedy of Doc Basswick's, Cal? Reckon I'd better buy me a bottle?"

"Cert'n'y," replied the barber, sarcastically. "Doc's got a large fam'ly to s'po't and every dollar he'ps."

"Haint no good, eh?" said Jeff.

"It's a daisy grower, 'co'din' to Doc," the barber answered. "You kin take one of these yer Mexican hairless dawgs and dab that regenerator on him a time or two and then sell him for a skye terrier—one of them kind you caint tell which end to feed—to hear Doc tell it."

"I reckon there haint nothing'll bring it back, oncet it's gone," Jeff observed, carelessly.

"Well, I wouldn't say that," said Cal. "I've got a renewer that's sure-pop—g'ar'nteed."

"You ought to use it yourse'f," Jeff commented. "Them locks you comb over your bald-spot haint no good recommend."

"Sho! I haint no use for hair," returned Cal, imperturbably. "I'm a married man and I don't want no trouble in the fam'ly and I'm a barber and I'm sick of hair. Jist the same, this here renewer'll do the work if a feller wants to foller directions. Trouble is, most bald-haided men are too daggone anxious and get discouraged if they don't raise a consid'able fuzz overnight. Then they switch off onto something else. But what's hair! If Absolom had had less hair and more sense he'd have lived longer, and so would Old Man Samson. No, your haid's level if it is bald, Jeff. But if you *did* keer about it, Bledsoe's Capillary would cert'n'y raise a stand you could braid inside of six months."

Jeff was silent until the last tender dab was made at his face and the towel whisked from beneath his chin. Then he said, "Lemme look at that Bledsoe stuff, Cal."

He took it and carefully read the directions printed on the label. For a moment or two he seemed to consider; then, with a sigh, he handed the bottle back.

"I reckon I wouldn't wish any," he

said. "I'd prob'ly taste of it to see what was into it and then I'd get a harelip."

Before he returned home, Jeff stopped in Allen's store to make some purchases and found the storekeeper in the ware-room tinkering with an odd contrivance that he explained was a gasoline stove.

"For Cap. Plummer's folks," Jim explained. "The old lady seen one at St. Joe and she's been pestering Cap. for one ever sence. You cook onto 'em, as long as you're spared—Hand me that there red lead, Jeff: the j'int's has got to be plum tight—as long as you're spared, and then you go a-sailing skyward in a char't of fire. But they're turrible convenient, until a person gets forgetful, and they're doing a right smart of cooking at Plummers' these days, what weth the gals and their comp'ny. They tell me Miss Pauline's a-going back to Westboro' the last of the week."

Jeff felt his heart sink lower than ever. "Is that so?" he asked, with a brave assumption of indifference.

"I wouldn't swear to it," said Allen. "Not if that young spark Orlando Fenwick kin keep her from it, and seems like he's making a consid'able headway. That's the talk; but I reckon you know as much about it as I do. Anyway, they're fixing for some doings."

JEFF drove homeward greatly depressed. It was not the first time that he had heard of the rapid progress of Fenwick's courtship, but the news of Pauline's approaching departure seemed to bring a more perfect realization of it.

As he approached Plummers' he noticed again the flutter of white dresses on the veranda and, drawing nearer, made out the figures of Pauline and Beulah. He averted his head, obstinately, nevertheless, and seeing that, Pauline suddenly caught Beulah's arm.

"Call him," she urged, breathlessly. "Call him—quick!"

Beulah willingly lifted up her voice. "Oh, Jeff," she cried. "Jeff Gooch!"

Jeff turned, and his hand went almost to the brim of his straw hat—and then waved an awkward greeting; but he only stopped at the second call and returned an inclusive "Howdy." "I'm in a rush,"

he added, pleasantly, but in a voice that he feared would betray his agitation.

"I want to speak to you," persisted Beulah; but Jeff only smiled and shook his head.

"All right for you, then! But Jeff, say you'll be over Thursday evening. It's the last chance you'll have of seeing Pauline here. Quit that, Pauline! You'll come, Jeff?"

"I reckon," Jeff answered, and, in a sort of a panic, he shook his lines and the mules jogged on.

"He wont come," Beulah asserted, with melancholy conviction.

Pauline's cheeks were an angry red and she was looking after the wagon with no amiable expression. "He's cert'n'y got a right ugly disposition," she responded, with a little toss of her head, "if *that's* the kind he is!"

"'Taint like Jeff," admitted Beulah, sadly.

Jeff, on his part, was in a turmoil of emotion. The sight of Pauline was of itself sufficient to account for that. And there was added the difficulty presented by his half acceptance of Beulah's invitation. In his nightly solitude he thrashed the matter out, pro and con. Why not go? See her for a while, anyway, watch her as she moved, listen as she spoke. Perhaps she would sing again. Jeff felt that he would like to hear her sing. He pictured her as on that memorable night, standing by the organ, straight as a hickory sapling, her hands clasped loosely behind her back, her head upheld, her lips parted and her long-lashed eyelids drooping as if they might wink on tears.

Lonely, like a withered tree,
What is all the world to me!
Life and light were all in thee—

All in her! All in her! All the beauty and happiness that existence had promised bound up in that little, sharp-tongued, light-headed, bright-eyed girl, and lost with the loss of her! Mighty hard luck! Harder than the feller in the song had. There would be no grave to weep good-by over, with a sense of proprietorship; no waiting at Heaven's gate. No, she would leave him without that consoling hope to go back to West-

boro', very much alive and in excellent spirits—maybe to do her sewing for a wedding. Maybe Fenwick would squire her home! No, daggone if he, Jeff, would go to see that flap-eared dude lallygagging around. Not much!

But he might get Pauline off by herself, and to be alone with her, to talk, even for a few minutes, as they had talked on those two never-to-be-forgotten drives—! Yes, by gollies! he would go.

Again and again he would, and again and again he would not, and so he wrestled with contending resolutions until he fell into fitful slumber. But when the morning came he had made up his mind. He would go—not to Plummers' but to St. Joe. There was a commission man at that city whom Jeff knew and liked and who had more than once, and with sincere urgency, invited the young farmer to visit him.

He took occasion to hint at his purpose during the day, and, having reconciled his family to the idea, he prepared for the jaunt and late on the afternoon of Thursday he started.

Phil Stovey, the elderly hired man, accompanied him, and when they emerged from the lane that led from the farm-house Phil noticed that Jeff was taking the long road and objected.

"I aimed to take back that plow coulter to Herman Koch," he explained. "It had ought to be took back."

Jeff pulled up the horse. It had been his intention to avoid the Plummer house, but his intention was somewhat weak. "Caint you give it to him as you come back?" he asked.

Phil shook his head. "Herman might want to use it," he said.

Jeff turned the buggy. After all, it wouldn't matter. He could drive a-past at a lively clip—and the gals would be in the kitchen, fixing for the doings, anyway.

JEFF'S surmise as to the whereabouts of the young women was founded on sound calculation. They had been in the kitchen with Rhoda, the fat old negro potentate of that domain, a good part of the morning, and since dinner until the unexpected and untimely arri-

val of Mr. Orlando Fenwick, who explained that he was a master hand at bossing cooks and allowed that his services might be conducive to the success of the coming entertainment. All he asked was an apron, being as he had got his good clothes on.

There was no doubt about the clothes. Setting aside the qualification of his ears, Jeff's characterization of him as a dude was eminently correct on this occasion. He was attired in a black, bob-tailed coat that was the last cry of '84 fashion—a cry that was almost a howl; his collar was painfully high; his necktie, made with a flat fold, was of the new shade "old gold;" his striped trousers displayed with confidence the contours of his manly limbs, and his shoes were pointed alarmingly; moreover, he saluted the young women with a flourish of an exceedingly low-crowned and narrow-brimmed bowler hat, and a strong scent of *eau de cologne* exhaled from his person.

"Shoo!" cried Clarissa, severely, flapping her apron at him. "Pauline, take him away, for the land's sake!"

"I caint," said Pauline, who was whipping a bowl of eggs into a froth. "I've got something better to do."

"Then I'll set here and see how it's done," declared the swain, spreading his odorous pocket-handkerchief on the bench by the door.

Eventually, however, Pauline surrendered her eggs and with a show of reluctance accompanied Fenwick to the end of the porch that was screened from the kitchen part by a green lattice-work.

"You cert'n'y ought to know better than to come at this time of day," Pauline remarked, as she seated herself in one of the big porch rockers. But her tone showed no particular resentment.

"How kin I he'p it?" demanded 'Lando, with a killing smile. "I knowed you was still here and I wasn't tied hand 'n' foot. If I had been, I'd have rolled here."

Pauline tossed her head, coquettishly. "You'd have spiled them pretty clothes," she said. Assuredly the clothes were pretty. A girl would have been more or less than human not to have conceded that. And Orlando was a fine figure of

a man, undeniably, to say nothing of the fact that he was heir to some hundreds of broad, fertile acres and could give his wife anything she wanted.

"Clothes wouldn't hinder me," said Orlando, moving his chair closer to hers.

"Don't them shoes hurt your feet?" inquired Pauline, artlessly.

Orlando at once looked as if they did, but he denied it—lamely, too. It took him some little time to recover from that repulse, which Pauline followed up with rapid-fire small-talk, designed to hold him in check. For a little while her tactics succeeded, but presently she gave him an opening.

"What for are you looking at me that-a-way?" she asked, blushing a little.

"Because I like for to look at you," he replied, deliberately; "because I caint look at you hard enough or long enough; because I'd like for to have you where I could look at you the hull enduring time; because—"

He stopped, becoming aware that his eloquence was being wasted on unregarding ears. Pauline was listening, but it was to Beulah's voice, raised in wrath and scorn.

"You low-down he-tattler, you snooping, underhand eavesdrop!" Clearly Beulah was greatly moved. "To hide and listen, and then run off and carry tales for to make mischief! Shame on you! Jist you wait till I tell Paw! If he don't give you a hiding, I know some-buddy that will. Joke? You'll get joked!"

Beulah ceased abruptly, with a choking sound, and her heels thumped rapidly across the porch floor. The next moment she appeared, her plump little hands tightly clenched and her blue eyes blazing.

"That Hank!" she said, excitedly. "That thing! What do you think he done, Pauline? Listened out there by the maple to us talking, right after Jeff went away, the first time you seen him. Then he goes and tattles to Jeff what you said, that—"

She checked herself and, with a glance at Fenwick, added, "You remember what you said, honey."

Pauline, who had grown pale, nodded dumbly.

"He told Jeff," stormed Beulah. "Jist for a joke, he says. Thought it was smart!"

"He told me about it," Fenwick put in, with a snicker.

Beulah wheeled on him. "I've got my opinion of such-like jokes and folks that laugh at them," she said, with a stamp of her foot. "I'll see what Paw thinks." She ran down the porch steps and speeded toward the barn.

Fenwick laughed uncomfortably. "She sho'ly is worked up over it," he observed. "If I was Rufus Blinn, I'd be right jealous. But you don't need for to feel bad—Pauline."

Pauline stared blankly at him, but made no reply. Fenwick bent forward and took her hand. It was limp and cold, but unresisting.

"I was going for to say—"

What he was going to say may be guessed, but will never certainly be known, for Pauline suddenly snatched her hand away and sprang to her feet.

"I'm like my cousin Beulah, Mr. Orlando Fenwick," she said, in an unsteady voice and trembling very much. "I've got my opinion of you. I'll tell you what it is, too, if you ask me, but I reckon you'd better not."

"I—I—don't know what I've done," Fenwick faltered, not unreasonably. Indeed, he had only treated her with the most flattering kindness and taken infinite pains and spent good money for her entertainment. But when were women ever grateful?

She smiled at him; and her smile was unmitigated insult, far beyond speech.

Just rage seized Orlando. A moment before he had wilted; now he swelled; his face crimsoned and his fists involuntarily closed into knotty instruments for assault and battery.

"I reckon I know what's ailing you," he said at last, in a guttural voice. "Mebbe you'd like for to ask *me* what it is. Playing me off against Gooch, was you? Well, I'm too smart for you. You caint do it. I'm through weth you."

On the way to the barn he met Beulah and her father. "I haint wanted here," he informed them abruptly, and passed on. Beulah attempted neither to stay nor gainsay him, but Cap. Plummer, greatly

concerned, hurried after the young man to question and remonstrate. Questioning and remonstrance, however, were in vain. Orlando saddled in hot haste and departed. He had learned one thing about girls. Pity that there should be so many more things that he, being a man, would forever remain in ignorance of!

A FEW minutes later a buggy drove rapidly by. Beulah, from an upper window, recognized Jefferson Gooch as one of the occupants, but, although she raised the sash and called, Jeff drove on. She told Pauline about it but failed to understand what her cousin replied. A large goose-feather pillow is not conducive to distinct articulation, not when one is lying with one's face buried in it.

Beulah sighed as she left the room. As she descended the stairs, she heard a rapping at the front door and went and opened it.

"Why, Jeff!"

Jeff, red and confused. Mighty serious-looking, too.

"I—I—I'm a-going to St. Joe," he said hurriedly. "I turned back for to tell you.... Seemed like it wouldn't be manners not to tell you I couldn't come this evening—if you-all was expecting of me."

"Why, that's all right, Mr. Gooch," returned Beulah, very politely. "I reckon you're in a hurry, too. You needn't have took the trouble. Well, I hope you'll have a right nice time. Good-by."

He had sneaked halfway to the gate when she called him back and he was astonished to find her bubbling with mirth. Every dimple in her face (she had three, counting the one in her chin) laughed at him. Still more astonished was he when she took him by the lapels of his coat, pulled him inside and, still holding him, kicked the door shut.

"You big, silly lummo!" she said, not unkindly. "You go in there." She pushed him into the sitting-room. "Clarissa wants for to see you."

"But I'm in a right smart of a hurry," Jeff protested, weakly. "I've got a train for to ketch."

"I tell you Clarissa wants for to see you," reiterated Beulah, giggling.

"She'll be right mad if she don't. She's mad at you now. You stay there, now."

She shut that door, too, and sped upstairs.

Just the space of time required for a young woman to drag another young woman from a recumbent posture, comb and arrange some disheveled tresses and apply cold water and who-knows-what to her tear-stained countenance—just that time and a fraction over elapsed before the sitting-room door opened once more, and Pauline stood on the threshold.

A very woe-begone and timid Pauline. Not at all like the young woman who had sent Mr. Fenwick packing so very recently. She slowly walked up to Jeff Gooch and began her pitiful little confession—how she had just learned that Hank had repeated what she had wickedly, untruthfully said—and never meant. Not that she expected to be forgiven; she didn't deserve such. But Jeff was to know, and believe that she never meant it, and that she had been miserable all the time since the dance, and would be miserable all her life if—

Jeff looked at her long and earnestly and then, with a queer little smile, said, "Do you reckon you kin look at the top of my haid and tell me what I'm thinking right now?"

"Oh, don't!" she begged passionately. "Don't say that—ever!"

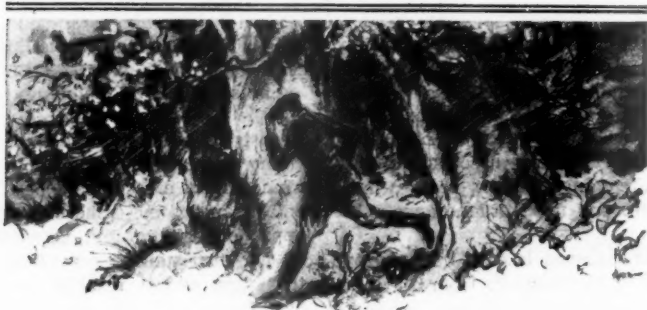
"Do you know what I'm thinking now? Jist look at me."

She returned his steadfast gaze and at last gave a long sigh and nodded.

"I reckon I know. Yes, I know. It haint possible, but yes, Jeff dear. Do *you* know?"

THERE is one further circumstance that it may not be improper to relate: That a little later, Jeff having again tentatively referred to his baldness, mentioning the Bledsoe cure, Pauline disengaged herself from his embrace sufficiently to pull his head down and press her warm young lips right on its smooth summit with the most unmistakable fervor.

"I haven't told you this," said Pauline: "I jist *love* it the way it is."



The Battle of Shiny Ford

*THE love story of a young man
who had too much money.*

By Winona Godfrey

ILLUSTRATED BY R. F. JAMES

BRINSMADE would not have noticed Faxon particularly if Ellinwood had not introduced him with a quite obvious reluctance. Brinsmade wondered why. Faxon was certainly presentable and by far, the handsomest man present, although there was something inefficient about him. He rather reminded Brinsmade of an angling passé beauty: he was so willing to please; he was so over-attentive to the younger man's casual remarks. That placed him for Brinsmade—he was familiar with the type. Every rich man is, and Brinsmade was unusually sensitive. This fawning upon his money always sickened him.

He would have liked to forget all that money, if people only would let him. The women were the worst. They were fast making a misogynist out of an affectionate young man who naturally would have regarded all women as incipient madonnas. His trail through life was blazed by the widows and orphans and sisters and cousins and daughters and aunts who camped perpetually and designingly upon it.

Faxon had not been talking with him two minutes before Miss Faxon began to creep into the conversation. No doubt Faxon thought he was doing it very craftily.

Ellinwood came to the rescue. "Thought I'd better interfere," he grinned, "before old Faxon dragged you home to dinner."

"Who is he, anyway?"

"There's always a few Faxons in every community like this," said Ellinwood: "people who scheme to be carried up by the local high tide." Faxon probably would have been all right if he hadn't been cursed with an ambitious wife. I imagine she's always goading him. They had their little place here long before all these country estates became fashionable. Faxon came forward early and had no trouble getting into the Country Club. They've been hanging onto the edge of things ever since, trying to capture a millionaire?"

"For Miss Faxon, eh?"

"Oh, certainly, incidentally for Miss Faxon."

"Well, what's the matter with her?"

asked Brinsmade, amused. "Can't she get away with it? Is she old—ugly—silly—or what?"

Ellinwood lighted a cigarette gloomily. "Oh, she's about twenty-four."

"Ugly?"

"Ugly!" Ellinwood gave a little snort. "I bet little old Helen of Troy never had a thing on Miss Faxon!"

"What's the row, then?"

"Well, it looks to me as if they thought she was such a tearing beauty they could afford to wait for some really big fish. Miss Faxon has a sporting disposition, too, and likes the game, I guess. *She* isn't going to waste her time or her looks on any small fry."

"I've seen lots of that sort," yawned the rich young man. "They usually end by taking what they can get."

"Did you know Rankin—Oliver Rankin? Great, big, good-looking fellow, polo-player and all that. He came down here visiting the Binford's and got an awful crush on Miss Faxon. He was rushing her in great shape when all of a sudden it comes out that he's no more chance of getting Uncle's money than a jack-rabbit. Well, sir, the very next day she turned him down cold. Wouldn't even see him. That was the gossip, anyway."

"You speak with exceeding bitterness," teased Brinsmade. "Did you ever enter the lists?"

Little Ellinwood reddened. "Oh, I was scratched at the post. None but huskies need apply. They say she said she didn't consider a man a real man if he couldn't carry her across Shiny Ford. And she's no light weight either, believe me."

"Rather exacting!"

"Oh, if I'd had a million I'd have stood a good enough show," growled little Ellinwood. Then, grinning, he measured Brinsmade ostentatiously with his eyes. "Say, Webb, I advise you to lock yourself up!"

Brinsmade laughed and dismissed the Faxon's from his mind.

At home he found a letter from "Aunt Charlotte." She was his Uncle Dan Harden's second wife and had been a widow with one daughter. Webb had yet to meet Myra. Aunt Charlotte was

so curious about his new place—she hoped she and Myra would be able to run down soon to visit him.

THE idlest gossip sometimes is of the most tremendous importance—not in itself, but because of the color it imparts to future impressions and events. Brinsmade was not in the least conscious of how much Ellinwood's frivolous revelations tainted his first meeting with Cecil Faxon. If he had been aware of it, though, he would not have used the word tainted. He probably would have considered it "revealing light."

He was about to enter the anteroom at his first Country Club dance when the girl suddenly appeared in the doorway. His sensation was exactly that of a man in a dark room who has a light cast in his eyes.

Cecil Faxon's beauty was not the sort that dawns upon you gently. It was not like a hearth-fire before which you bask as you admire it. It was more like an explosion. It startled you and upset you generally, and likely as not set you on fire before you could escape.

Brinsmade caught his breath: it takes steady nerves not to jump when somebody sets off a roman candle in your face.

There was an exuberance about Miss Faxon's beauty—I don't mean that it was in the least *buxom*. She was like a splendid melodrama—extremely effective, but hardly true to every-day life. One some way suspected her of being not artificial but, well, supernatural. Her hair was an impossible shade: not yellow, not red—gold supernaturalized, (if there is such a word).

She was laughing, and the mirth of it seemed to change into triumph as Brinsmade stood as if moonstruck, directly in her way. Behind her, he became aware of Faxon peering at him like an amiable *Mephisto* leering at *Faust* over *Marguerite's* shoulder. Only the *Marguerite* part did not suit Miss Faxon at all. She was much more like one of those excessively alluring nymphs summoned by incantation to tempt ancient knights or exhibited as purchase-price for the soul of some hard-bargain-driving St. Anthony.

Faxon's expression, like one saying "Here's luck!" affected Brinsmade unpleasantly, though indeed he might never have accorded it the least significance if he hadn't got it through Ellinwood's interpretation of the Faxons.

"Well!" cried the beaming Faxon. "How do you do, Mr. Brinsmade? Let me present you to my daughter. Cecil, this is *Mr. Brinsmade*."

"Mr. Brinsmade," Cecil murmured, omitting her father's italics. She gave him a cool hand, which he dropped immediately.

Mrs. Faxon now appeared. Less obvious than her husband, they both had an air of exhibiting their daughter in triumphant pride. "Isn't she wonderful!" they seemed to exclaim. "Candidly, wouldn't you give a good deal for her, my dear rich young man? Think it over and—er—make us an offer!"

THE ballroom fairly vibrated with excitement as this brief but dazzling procession entered. Brinsmade had the sensation of being dragged at chariot-wheels. He felt sure all the Faxons would have loved to make the circuit of the whole floor. Everybody was tremendously amused. "Look!" was in the air. "Already! What do you think of that!"

The men grinned—rather sourly. They sneered at Brinsmade with a little malice—that of secret jealousy. Men are afraid of the excessively beautiful woman. They are terrified by her power over them. They would rather be worshiped than to worship. For once conceit fails them. They know they could never hold her. They hide from her, thinking of vampires, and yet covet her, secretly hoping that she will drag them forth and devour them.

Figuratively, Brinsmade felt the cold sweat of the about-to-be-devoured. He hated himself for a poor, weak fool, at the same time that he re-formed all previous ideas of heavens into this of being devoured—to the last shred—by Cecil Faxon.

A man of mere senses would not have felt himself a fool, but Brinsmade was proud and sensitive. One by one he had seen the young men of his own stamp

captured by some designing little siren bent on security for modistes and milliners. And he had vowed contemptuously: "I see myself!" And now places were turned—and screws, too.

Of course, much of this came later. On this first night, although he danced with her several times, they had very little to say to each other. "Pretty country." "Oh, yes." "What are you calling your place?" "Brinsmoor." "Ah, yes. Nice name. Charming place." "Have you learned the tatao?" And so on.

She treated him with indifference. No making of eyes, no unconscious inclining of perfumed head toward his shoulder. But this merely notified him of her skill.

He looked so savage when the evening was over that little Ellinwood was afraid to prod him. He knew he was under a fatal spell not to be exorcised by book and candle. He was like some poor fisherman clutching and crossing himself before a wayside shrine. "Help me, Lady of Pity! I have seen the Lorelei!"

Naturally, none of this appeared on the outside. Brinsmade called perfunctorily on the Faxons because it would have been absurd not to. Cecil, more human if not less lovely in an afternoon gown, showed no indication of falling upon his neck. He was acquiring humility when he descried the hovering of Papa and Mamma. That revived his caution and his suspicions. It was obvious that Miss Faxon disliked him. It was Papa and Mamma who asked him to dinner, who urged him to be neighborly—

It was disgusting, he hissed at himself. Never, never would he buy a woman with his money! And yet, and yet—no, never, *never*!

A FEW weeks passed. He saw Cecil frequently—at the Club-house, usually surrounded by men; on the tennis courts or golf course; and then he dined with the Faxons and they dined with him. On the few occasions when he was alone with her they had very little to say to each other. This was his fault, he knew. He was afraid to trust himself.

"Wonder what's happened to old Faxon?" said Ellinwood one day on the

Club veranda. "He looks kind of down in the mouth lately, don't you think?"

"I hadn't noticed it," said Brinsmade.

"I think they're hard-up," Ellinwood confided. "The dazzling Cecil's clothes cost real money, I bet. You know it's like sinking all your capital in some big scheme that hasn't begun to produce yet."

Brinsmade squirmed, and Ellinwood grinned surreptitiously. He wanted to say that the Faxons had banked a lot on Brinsmade and were worried because he wasn't playing up properly. Brinsmade got it perfectly without words.

Faxon now approached them, and he did seem to have aged perceptibly in the last month. Something appealing about him irritated the young man beyond endurance, so that very shortly he excused himself and left them.

He started to walk home by a lane leading to the rivulet that divided Brinsmoor from the grounds of the Wildemar Country Club. There was storm in the air, that hush and languor and slight uneasiness that herald a thunder-shower.

He was thinking of Faxon, wondering savagely whether he should offer to lend him money. It wasn't that he begrudged the confounded tribe mere money, and God knows it wasn't that he didn't want Cecil, but it was this rotten way of going at it—this sickening barter and sale, this never knowing that she hadn't been crazy about Rankin—

At the end of this lane was Shiny Ford. Brinsmade paused a moment before turning to the foot-bridge a hundred feet or so down-stream. The water was wonderfully clear, running about ten inches deep over a sandy bottom that just here caught a gleam of sunlight through the trees. That was why it had been called Shiny Ford before the days of foot-bridges.

He glimpsed a parasol in the Brinsmoor lane, and then suddenly Cecil Faxon appeared on the opposite shore.

She smiled. "How do you do, Mr. Brinsmade? Isn't this a new route for you?"

"Why, yes, it is. And you?"

"Oh, I come here often. It's trespassing, though, isn't it? I forget that Brinsmoor has a master now."

"And I forgot that fords are proverbially haunted by sirens."

It was the first time that he had been guilty of one of those inanities with which men continually bombarded her. She merely looked at him with no deepening of that slight, enigmatical smile. Quite unreasonably he was in a rage at her. He was sure that she knew he had heard that jest of hers about Shiny Ford and he felt her presence here to be a deliberate challenge. This was not so much conceit as the result of the eternal pursuit to which his wealth subjected him. Instead of making him complacent, as it does less sensitive men, this had engendered in Brinsmade a sort of perverse humility. He had come to doubt his own attractions if they were divorced from the magnet of his money. And what made him doubly furious with himself and her was that now he realized that he was willing to take her at any price. She might marry him for his money—for anything—if she would only marry him!

"Are you coming across, Miss Faxon?" he asked significantly.

She made a little motion down-stream. "I was just strolling to the next bridge."

He held her eyes with his. "But here is the place to cross," he said. "Shiny Ford is the proper place to cross."

He could not be sure that she even changed color. He stepped into the water and waded across to her side. She remained motionless as if paralyzed by the unexpected absurdity of his action.

"Shall I set you across?" he said in a low voice.

She fell back a step. "No, no—" she began breathlessly.

"Oh, yes," he said. And he picked her up as one would carry a child. He splashed through the stream and set her down on the other side. Both were white as milk and panting. Her eyes blazed lightning at him.

"Oh, oh!" she flashed in a very ecstasy of fury. "I—I'd like to kill you for that! You—you—" She turned suddenly and fled back along the lane he had just traversed.

Brinsmade took but one step in pursuit. After a moment he looked down at his wet legs as if surprised, like a

man remarking evidences of what he had just done in a state of hypnosis. A loud thunder-clap made him jump like a nervous woman. The storm was about to break.

Cecil would certainly reach the Club-house in a few minutes, so there was no use going after her. He might as well

did seem to flash pretty close sometimes, but he was still engrossed in that from Cecil's eyes.

A sudden burst of light blinded him, and a tremendous something seemed to crash immediately about him. "A tree struck," he thought. "Must be close—" He started to run—into darkness.



Hearing Miss Faxon's name, Myra started. Enter Miss Cecil Faxon—with that air of being perfectly sure of herself.

go on home before the shower began. He turned slowly, waded the brook again, and started toward his own house.

There was nothing particularly awesome about this autumn thunder-shower, and Brinsmade, still thrilling from the touch of the woman he loved, paid little attention to its progress. The lightning

BBRINSMADE did not take up the business of life again for some days. When he did so he found himself in bed surrounded by his man, his nurse, his doctor, his friend Ellinwood, his Aunt Charlotte and his cousin Myra. During the course of that perfectly ordinary little thunder-storm a tree in the river lane

had been struck by lightning. It had been neatly split, and the falling half had struck Brinsmade.

His life was in no danger, but his doctor, one of those frank pests who think it duty to tell the "whole truth," gravely informed him that in all likelihood he would always be lame. Rather sad news to a young man fond of getting nimbly around the earth.

His convalescence was not lonely. Among his first callers was Faxon, looking rather worn, but amiable as ever, and expatiating upon the sympathetic grief of all the Faxons. Ellinwood, too, was constant. He was present during Faxon's call and when he was gone broached this:

"Look here, Webb, I think I'd better tell you something."

"Fire away," said Brinsmade.

"Well—a couple of those first nights you were rather off your head, you know. You talked a good deal."

"What about?"

"Well—mostly about Miss Faxon."

"Miss Faxon! What did I say about her?"

Ellinwood grinned in a shamefaced fashion. "Like the fellow in the verse, Webb, I'm tellin' you this for your own good. You said a whole lot about Shiny Ford and—and—feeling her heart beating against yours."

Brinsmade sat silent a moment, frowning, his mouth set. Then: "Who heard me?" he asked harshly.

"Everybody within hearing distance," the other admitted. "But I was thinking of your aunt and—Miss Harden."

"Myra!" exclaimed the young man.

As if responding to a call, Myra Harden entered the room. She had taken her stepfather's name: her own name was Brown. She was a slight girl, with lots of light brown hair, and blue eyes, and a certain delicate look and air which men always think of as "spirituelle." So sweetly attentive had she been to Brinsmade that he had often tried to remember the rest of that verse about ministering angels. He had been grateful for these ministrations—until now, or at least he wished now that Aunt Charlotte had not arrived on the *first* train after his mishap.

Aunt Charlotte had taken charge of his household with characteristic energy. She also dispensed with the nurse as soon as possible. It was Myra who read to "Cousin Webb" and brought him a drink and his cigar and handed the matches and sat with him in the dusk.

He was soon perfectly well, save for that wretched leg, and since he was used to activity, he found it maddening sitting, sitting, day in and out. The doctor promised crutches soon—that would help a little—but he sighed heavily.

It was about three weeks after the "Battle of Shiny Ford," as he had named that eventful day, when his man brought in a card. He glanced at it carelessly, started, turned white, and then in a low voice: "Show Miss Faxon in."

Hearing that name, Myra, by the window, started too. Enter Miss Cecil Faxon—with that air of being perfectly sure of herself.

"This is so kind of you, Miss Faxon." Brinsmade put on exactly the same manner. "You'll pardon my not rising?"

She came and put her hand (that was like an electric battery) in the one he extended. "I'm glad to see you looking so well, Mr. Brinsmade."

"Let me present my cousin, Miss Harden. Myra, Miss Faxon is our neighbor."

"Indeed?" Myra murmured colorlessly. But her blue eyes took their neighbor in from head to foot.

Cecil was ravishing in a rather ultra costume of dark-blue velvet, from which her beauty gleamed like a diamond set in black onyx. Her wonderful hair, the wonderful milky pallor of her skin, the deep dusk of her eyes, the vividness of her mouth, seemed even more than usually breath-taking—her loveliness to have even more than usual the haunting poignance of some amazing wood-witch.

She sat down and began to repeat amusingly a lot of Country Club doings and gossip. Myra resumed her seat. Of course there was no reason why she should think of leaving them together. And then, very shortly, Aunt Charlotte came in, with something of the earpricked attention of Towser watching a new mole-burrow.

Miss Faxon stayed an hour, doing most of the talking, though considerably assisted by Mrs. Harden. The behavior of Brinsmade and Myra was amusingly similar. They said little and kept their eyes to themselves, only when Cecil was looking at Myra, Brinsmade gave Cecil long, deep looks, and when Cecil was looking at Brinsmade, Myra gave her long, searching glances. Miss Faxon appeared to examine them all impartially.

At the moment of leave-taking no one urged her to call again, so she supplied the lack herself.

"I'll come again some time," she said to Brinsmade, giving his hand the quick, firm pressure a man might have.

"You are very kind." He hated this sitting here helpless while she stood over him. That conquering moment of mere muscle at Shiny Ford was much more to his taste.

Mrs. Harden and Myra bade her a good-afternoon of icy sweetness.

"So that's Miss Faxon," observed the former, a little off-guard. "Well, she is very beautiful, of course."

"Quite too lovely," said Myra thoughtfully.

"Why too lovely?" he inquired.

Myra laughed a trifle uncertainly. "Much too gorgeous for every-day use, don't you think? Like wearing a tiara to breakfast. Keeping up a frenzy of admiration is wearing, don't you think? It always gives me a headache to look at masterpieces."

"You think Miss Faxon a masterpiece?" asked Brinsmade against his will.

"Of art," supplied Aunt Charlotte. Then hastily: "I don't mean artificial, you know. I mean she's sort of — of pagan."

"Vision of Lilith," murmured Brinsmade grimly. Then he fell into the dumps.

When people fall into the dumps they are likely either to torment themselves with absurd fears or to tell themselves unpleasant truths. Brinsmade all of a sudden faced himself, so to speak, about Cecil Faxon.

In spite of the fact that he was fully aware that he was merely so many guilt-

edged bonds to the Faxons, that they had deliberately set themselves the task of acquiring him, that he had vowed never to be so acquired, he admitted that on that day of Shiny Ford he had made up his mind to marry Cecil, excusing the barter with that ancient idea of loving the beloved into loving.

Why, he asked himself fiercely now, why had he dillydallied? Why had he pretended to himself? Why had he not clinched the bargain while he was at least a whole man? For now a fine figure he would cut (in his own eyes, to do him justice) limping through life with a woman who measured men by their muscle and their money, his limp and his wealth advertising upon exactly what terms he had bought that flaunted beauty. Where was his pride, that he could love such a woman? For it was love, not merely desire of beauty, since he ached not solely to possess but to grant her every wish. Since it was money she craved, he had fallen so low as to thank God for his riches.

At dinner (they wheeled him to the table now), Aunt Charlotte monopolized the conversation with lamentations over the unfortunate affair of the Jimmie Dagthorpes. A letter had informed her that Mrs. Jimmie was behaving scandalously with Edgar Steger, with whom all the world knew she had always been in love, although poor Jimmie had been allowed to give her his euphonious name along with his not inconsiderable income.

Myra was shocked; she didn't see how Lillian could treat him so; she didn't see how a man could marry a woman he must know cared for somebody else.

A WEEK dragged by. Aunt Charlotte and Myra had gone to a tea at the Country Club. Brinsmade had, in truth, rather urged this relaxation upon them. Their eternal loving vigilance became occasionally a trifle wearing. But now time to him limped with as distressing slowness as his own wheel-chair along the verandas of Brinsmoor.

Besides, he was beginning to see through it. Aunt Charlotte was endeavoring delicately to transform him from a nephew-in-law to a son-in-law.

Myra seemed not at all unwilling. It did not amuse him. As a matter of fact, it hurt. Why was it impossible for people to think of him as just a man and not a bank?

It was a warm, lazy Indian-summer afternoon. Brinsmade sat scowling at a pastel landscape signed "Autumn," when without the slightest warning Cecil Faxon appeared at the bottom of the veranda-steps. She was in riding-togs, breeched, booted, jaunty-hatted, and she carried a crop.

Brinsmade, surprised, straightened up and pulled off his cap.

"Hello," said Cecil easily. Her manner was that of a friendly young man. "Alone?"

"Yes." He almost gasped it.

"May I come up?" She proceeded to come up very confidently.

She sat in a wicker chair opposite him, crossed her legs like a shapely boy, and began to pull off her gloves.

"How's the bad leg getting on?" Of course she couldn't know that he hated it most because of her. "All right?"

"It'll never be all right," he muttered gloomily.

"Oh, yes, it will," she calmly declared.

He looked at her. "What makes you think so?"

"Because I wish it."

"Thanks. Do you always get your wishes?"

"Always."

"Then I double my gratitude. But the doctor says I'll always be lame."

"Old fool," observed Miss Faxon.

"Thanks again," he smiled.

She removed her hat, balanced it neatly on her knee, and gave her hair a few pats and pokes. Then she remarked nonchalantly:

"Aunt Charlotte and Myra gone to the tea, I suppose."

Brinsmade was quite thunderstruck by the impudence of those names, but Cecil was looking at him with such grave lips and such derisive eyes, that he grinned.

"Aunt Charlotte and Myra have gone to the tea."

"Yes, I saw them going. That's what put it into my bold head to call upon you left here defenseless and unchaperoned."

Brinsmade had never seen her like this before—not at all like this. He was startled, thrilled and puzzled.

"You're awfully good to take pity on my loneliness," he said, not wanting to say that at all.

"I have a kind heart," she admitted. "Although I wasn't asked to call again the last time I was here. Why wasn't I?" she demanded. "What are they afraid of? You know they both acted as if after that warning they'd certainly have a grating put around you!"

He laughed.

"They seemed to think I might—bite you, perhaps."

"I wish you had," he muttered idiotically.

She eyed him scornfully. "Now don't start that. Isn't it boorish of me to say such rude things about your relations?"

"It certainly is. Why do you do it?"

"Because pretty little Myra hates me."

"Nonsense. Why should she?"

"Are you really that obtuse or just pretending? Because she regards me as a bold, designing creature."

Brinsmade gave his chair a turn so that he was beside and facing her. He had changed color and his mouth was grim.

"Well, aren't you?" he said in a tense voice.

Now, that was putting it pretty straight. Miss Faxon, however, neither sprang up with blazing eyes, nor laid her good strong right hand across his cheek, nor hissed "Sir, you're insulting!" She merely leaned her head back lazily and inquired: "What do you think, yourself?"

That stumped him. He started to stammer something, but found he hadn't her unsuspected gift of perfect frankness.

"I don't see why everybody picks on me as the one horrid example," she complained, unperturbed. "Do you suppose, dear young Mr. Croesus, little Myra would get round-shouldered reading dreamy poetry to you if you were a poor relation?"

He liked that—it looked like jealousy. "What makes you pick on Myra?"

"I don't. She hit me first."

"Really, Miss Faxon, I'm sure you're



Brinsmade, surprised, straightened up. "Hello," said Cecil easily. Her manner was that of a friendly young man.
"Alone?" "Yes." He almost gasped it. "May I come up?"

wrong. Aunt Charlotte has plenty of money—" He stopped, wanting to kick himself for that.

"Dear Lord! What makes you so mercenary? I should think you had enough money to be able to forget it occasionally."

"You women wont let me."

"Don't you secretly cherish the idea that it's your manly beauty that attracts us?"

"Didn't you just say that Myra wouldn't look at me if I were poor?"

"Oh, you exempt Myra from the mercenary pursuers, do you? You think she loves you for your charming self alone?"

"I don't think she loves me at all," he denied crossly.

"If you snap at her like that she must adore you."

"What did you come here for?" he asked rudely. To ask rude questions is one of the privileges of love.

"Oh, because I wanted some one to quarrel with," she explained serenely, and smiled as if the question pleased her.

"You were never like this before," Brinsmade suddenly declared, "—never a bit like this."

"No?"

"You know it. Why weren't you?"

She laughed, a little gurgle on two low notes. "I'm sure I'm always my own gracious self. You were always so afraid I'd try to be nice to you that you stood prepared to squelch my first sweet advance."

"Don't be utterly absurd."

"Wasn't it dear little Billy Ellinwood who warned you to wear a coat-of-mail because the Faxon girl eats little boys raw?"

Brinsmade began to squirm. "Say, it isn't fair to hit a lame man."

"So I just thought I'd come over in a friendly way and show you how you've been misinformed, that I'm just a regular harmless sort of person in spite of my hair. Meek and—"

"Meek!" he sneered. "Yes, I've noticed that meek look of yours—"

"When?"

"At Shiny Ford." Bull's-eye!

"As for harmless!" he chortled. "Harmless as the—devil."

"Oh, you're afraid, aren't you!" she mocked, recovering.

"What would I be afraid of?" he retorted.

"I can't imagine, I'm sure."

Brinsmade's mask dropped. His knuckles showed white on the chair-arms.

"Yes, I am afraid, Cecil. I've been afraid the woman I love might be tempted or coerced into marrying me for—money."

"Most men take the woman they want at any price."

"I thought I was strong enough not to do that. And then I wanted her so much I began to persuade myself with that old fallacy—I love her, and so my love must teach her to love me."

"Is it a fallacy?" asked Miss Faxon in a very low voice.

"Yes," said Brinsmade harshly, "when the fool's a cripple."

"Webb," said Miss Faxon in perfectly distinct tones, "will you marry me?"

"No," he choked, white as when they picked him up after the lightning struck.

Then the serene Miss Faxon behaved stormily. She dropped the crop and sprang up so quickly that her hat rolled down the veranda-steps. She went down on her knees by the cripple's side, threw her arms around his neck, and laid her wonderful head forcibly upon his shoulder.

"You will, too," she sobbed. "I wish you'd lose your old money! I don't see how I can love you, anyway, when you're so hateful to me!"

"Cecil!" cried the young man, with a sob, too; and his arms held her fast there.

IT was quite some time later that a peculiar sound, a sort of combination sniff, snort and shocked gasp, caused the dark head to lift suddenly from the tawny one, and the tawny one to look around with a strangely shy expression which, however, changed instantly to a quite superb aplomb.

"Oh, Mrs. Harden, how do you do?" drawled Miss Faxon. "Er—would you mind bringing up my hat?"

The Previous Chapters of Mr. Hughes' Powerful Novel, "EMPTY POCKETS"

WE come now to the final installment of Mr. Hughes' powerful novel of New York life. It has told the story of the last year of the life of Merry Perry Merithew, profligate head of an old New York family, man-about-town and "prize humming bird" in the garden of love.

Merry Perry married for love. But his volatile, thrill-hunting nature soon sent him into inconceivable places for the excitement he craved. His neglected wife stuck to him even after he became conspicuous among the conspicuous.

When he had come to handsome middle age, a new and controlling impulse took hold of Merithew. He wanted to divorce his wife, give up his scandalous ways and settle to righteous living. His new determination came after a chance meeting with the beautiful copper-haired daughter of Jacob Schuyler, a man of integrity, colossal fortune and old Dutch family.

Muriel Schuyler went one day to her father's office and demanded five thousand dollars to ransom a little Italian boy who had been kidnaped. Perry Merithew, who was often "broke," was in the office trying to borrow. Jacob Schuyler refused both.

Merithew, who was struck with Muriel's beauty, telephoned her later that if she would come to the yacht club that evening and dance with him, he would place the five thousand in her hand. Muriel went and was seen accepting the money by Pet Bettany, a society hanger-on.

MURIEL felt no close interest in Merithew. She had met a young physician, Clinton Worthing, in a street accident, and although Worthing was conscious of his poverty, he could not help falling in love with her. He took up her charity work with her.

While with her poor, Muriel found a lovely Russian girl, Maryla Sokalska, with copper hair like Muriel's own, bending over the machine where she sewed overalls fourteen hours a day. In pity, Muriel got Maryla a position as model in Dutilh's fashionable dressmaking shop. Merithew, there one day buying gowns for Aphra Shaler, one of his favorites, saw Maryla, and added the ignorant girl to his list of conquests.

Meantime, Muriel was kidnaped by gun-men while on a visit to the slums.

"Red Ida," a cabaret singer and purse lifter and the wife of one of the gun-men, became alarmed and told Perry Merithew, with whom she was dancing at a café, what had been done. This knowledge gave Merithew the chance to rescue Muriel.

In alarm, Muriel's parents took her to Europe. Merithew pursued and hovered around as much as his great service to Muriel persuaded Jacob Schuyler to allow. But Muriel returned to America wholly unaware of Merithew's passion for her.

MERITHEW, trying to reform, sent poor Maryla adrift, snubbed Aphra Shaler and avoided Red Ida. Maryla gave birth to a child, which she left at an asylum for foundlings. Muriel learned of the child but not of the parentage, and told Maryla to get the child and that she would help care for it. Maryla went, leaving behind a peculiar hatpin Merithew had given her, which servants later put in Muriel's room.

It was now sultry summer, but Merithew stayed in town because Muriel was there to carry on her charitable work. One hot evening when the servants had all gone out and Worthing was not able to see Muriel, Merithew called up and asked her to go for a 'bus ride. The novelty pleased and Muriel accepted.

She took Merithew into the slums, where people were gasping for breath in the torrid night heat. No one noticed the unusual pair enter the tenements where Maryla's parents lived. They went up to the roof. In response to Muriel's great pity for the heat-smitten poor, Merithew gave her what money he had, his ring and pearl pin. Muriel was touched, and as Merithew talked of her beauty and goodness, she let him remove her hat and lay the pin on a wall. Merithew, overcome by her nearness, fought against the desire in him to make love to her. The desire won. He clenched his arms around her with a snarl.

Muriel was suddenly like a wild cat at the insult. She struck him and he fell, his head hitting the chimney. His hand was in her hair, and he dragged her with him. To her horror, the hand stiffened in death held her prisoner. She cut herself loose with his penknife and crept away to her deserted town home, leaving behind the tell-tale strands of copper-colored hair and Maryla's hatpin of peculiar design.



Empty Pockets

THE FINAL INSTALLMENT OF THE
MOST ABSORBING NOVEL OF THE YEAR

By Rupert Hughes

Author of "What Will People Say?" etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

CHAPTER XXXVI

AMONG the hundreds of wretches whom the relaxed laws permitted to sleep in Central Park on that hot night in July, one poor jade of the shops had made her bed on a knoll across the street from the Schuyler home. She had worked hard at her counter, swaying on her feet all day, and gone trudging to her boarding house at night, only to find her bedroom insufferably stifling. She had walked across the eastern avenues to the Park, had found a nook there among the shrubs, and had toppled over on the dewless grass.

Sleepless with the very famine of sleep, she had gazed at the dark windows of the Schuyler mansion and had thought of its lucky tenants with bitter envy. She was an average girl, who had been averagely honest and dishonest.

She saw the brief light in Muriel's room, and when it was quenched, the dark window had seemed the very emblem of cool security and peace and luxurious content.

She had rolled on the grass in an agony of covetousness and moaned: "O

Gawd, whyn't You throw some o' them things my way?"

Muriel, if she had known, would have been glad to exchange lots with her. For Muriel in her palace, in her room copied from the Petit Trianon, in her bed fit for a princess, in her nightgown of silk and lace, between her sheets of sheerest linen — Muriel was stretched on the iron bed of remorse; her thoughts were the thoughts of a murderess escaped by a miracle the continuance of which she could not hope for.

She was almost more bewildered than she was regretful or afraid. She could not explain the hideous effect by what causes she could trace. They were so innocent, and the result so packed with shame.

She had brought upon herself the guilt of murder by saving herself from the guilt of dalliance. Her decency had been Perry Merithew's destruction and hers. And that was the puzzle that maddened her.

Justify her act as she would, its consequence was the death of a man.

What else ought she to have done? She must either have let him have his infamous way with her, or she must have

resisted him. God could not have wanted her to yield: it was her better soul that fought.

Then why did God make him die? She could find no clue, and there was no comfort in saying that the human cannot understand the divine.

Once she had killed Perry, what ought she to have done? There was the choice of calling in witnesses, or of trying to escape. It was unthinkable that she should have remained there on her hands and knees, with her hair in his cold hands, and screamed till people came.

Besides, God must have wanted her to get away, or He would have had her caught. And if He wanted her to get away, then He must mean for her to get away forever.

Then He must mean that she should go on hiding from the public and the newspapers and the police. For if she told the people, they might not believe that she had meant no harm to Perry Merithew. They might not believe that she meant only to save him and herself from a miserable wicked deed. They might send her to the Chair—strap her to that throne of dishonor and shatter her with the lightning! She did not deserve to be branded and punished as a murderess. Perry Merithew did not deserve to be killed. He was a bad man, but not a murderer. And they only killed murderers. Yet he was dead, and she was in danger of death.

Why? Why? Why?

She said the word over to herself until it became gibberish: she shook her head and whispered, No, no, no! till that word became the uncouth chattering of an ape. Everything she said to herself in that long dark communion in the cloister of her arms locked over her head became jabber, till she felt that she was going mad, was gone mad.

And the worst fear of all her fears was that in her madness she might begin to babble and might blab the truth.

For the old Satan that whispers "Tell it! tell it to somebody! tell it!" was whispering it to her, was hissing it at her. She squeezed her hands across her ears, but the whisper seemed to steal in between.

It was too much agony for one young

girl to bear, and all that saved her was that she was not strong enough to bear it. By and by her nerves, like wires that have carried too heavy a charge, burned out. She could feel no more, regret no more, think no more.

Exhaustion came to her in the pardon of sleep. And when the rays of the risen sun like a cat o' nine tails lashed awake the dreary slumberers in the Park, it found her what the desolate shopgirl, dragging herself from her couch to her counter, imagined her to be: a beautiful figure blissfully asleep under a canopy of silk.

LONG after the shopgirl had finished her coffee and oatmeal in the quick-lunch room, and had taken her place in the narrow aisle along the shelves, Muriel was awakened by the sound of water set running in the marble tub, and by the timid voice of the housemaid:

"You left word to be called at eight, Miss. It's half-past now, please."

Muriel sat up, blinked drowsily at the familiar surroundings, and wondered why she felt so heavy-headed; why every muscle ached—why she felt so afraid.

And then she remembered, and flung herself back among her pillows, and hid her face, and was again the criminal, the fugitive, the sneak who had no place in a reputable home.

She whispered to the maid:

"Go away! Leave me alone! Go away!"

But the maid supposed that this was merely the usual protest of a pretty lie-abed. She was full of sympathy, but she urged: "Beg pardon, Miss, but you said it was important. And your breakfast is coming up, please."

Muriel nodded obedience and beckoned for her bathrobe, thrust her heavy arms into it, and her bare feet into the little mules, and slunk to her bathroom. She felt as if she dragged clanking leg-irons at her feet.

She longed to drown herself in the hot pool, to steep herself in oblivion and let her soul escape like steam, palely visible one moment and then nothing. But when she was again in her bed, with the tray of breakfast upon her knees, she was hungry. The iced grapefruit

was sharply sweet, the egg in the cup was full of savor, and the coffee was worth living for.

On the tray was a folded morning paper. She was afraid to open it, but at last she did, as gingerly as if the ink were venomous, as it might well have been. She saw that there were big headlines, and she was afraid to look. It was more excitement over the Archduke of Austria and his wife, who had been killed a month ago. The deed was done as far away as Bosnia, in a curious unheard of place called Sarajevo. A young Servian had pistoled them both to death, and the minor headline declared that the result of the act might re-open the old Balkan trouble.

It was all as remote to Muriel as Bosnia itself. She could not imagine that it would ever affect her or anyone she knew. She searched the paper, and there was not a line about her own assassination of Perry Merithew. She felt a tremendous relief for a moment, and then the burden of suspense fell back crushingly upon her aching head.

Still a little dazed, she fumbled in her mind, wondering why she had left word to be called. Last night was so far away. She recollected it at last. There was a meeting in the United Charities Building, and she had promised to be there. What was the object of the meeting?

Something about children playing in the streets. Oh, yes! One day she had invented a foolishly pretty scheme. Many, many children got run over in the streets; yet the children had no other place to play, and people had wondered what to do, since they could not keep the children indoors all the time. And then Muriel had had the sublimely foolish idea that since the children could not be kept off the streets, the wagons and motors must be. The scheme had taken the shape of closing certain streets to traffic at certain hours.

Muriel smiled again at the thought of it. She would go to the meeting. She must go. Her absence would create comment. Her presence would be an argument for innocence.

And then she remembered that Mrs. Merithew was the chairman of that committee.

II

MURIEL thrust the tray away and fell back on her pillows. She could not, would not, dared not face the wife of the man she had—she could not think the word.

But sleep would not take her back into its null and void. Lying awake, she felt helpless before the world, exposed, exhibited to the eyes of mankind. If she were up and moving about, at least she could run.

She raised herself once more and flung into her clothes. She would not wait for one of her father's cars to be summoned from the garage. She walked till a taxicab came along, and when she got in, and the shoddy old driver leaned out to hear where he should go, she wanted to tell him "Canada!" But she told him "The Charities, at Twenty-second Street and Fourth Avenue." And she rode through the blithe morning streets wondering what the people would say if they knew what she had done.

She reached the meeting place and told the taxi-man to wait. Mrs. Merithew greeted Muriel with voluble affection. She did not even know that she was a widow, that her husband had died on a roof in Allen Street!

Mrs. Merithew called the meeting to order, explained triumphantly that she had seen the necessary city officials and had won from them an order closing the selected streets during the afternoon hours. It was a glorious victory, one of the tenderest acts of the great mother-hearted city. A vote of thanks was due Miss Schuyler for the inspiration.

Muriel recalled that day, a year or so ago, when she had come to town and motored through a street crowded with children who had no other place to play, and her father's car had struck one of them down—the crippled Happy Hangan. The chauffeur had looked at her and in a look had asked if he should run away, and she had forbidden the escape, had faced the mob and been wounded by it, had quelled it and taken the victim of the accident under her own protection.

If she had never carried him home, she would never have met the Angelillo



Pet's escape was conveniently facilitated by the arrival of a purblind servant who announced: "Miss Sokalska." Muriel
her head and hurried out as Maryla came in. Pet had forgotten to say



nodded and said: "Wont you stay and meet her?" Which was equivalent to saying: "Of course you wont." Pet shook "Thank you," but it is not expected of untamed animals given their liberty.

people or known of their kidnaped boy. Then she would never have gone to her father's office to beg for his ransom money; she would not have met Perry Merithew then, or perhaps ever. She would not have begun that long chain of meetings that ended in his death.

If she had done the cowardly thing, or the indifferent thing, she would now be innocent, at peace and unafraid.

What was the moral of it all? She had done good, and evil had come of it! If she had done evil, good would have come of it!

WHEN at last the meeting adjourned, Mrs. Merithew took Muriel by the arm, clung to her in the elevator, would not let her go home in the taxicab she had held. They had a silly combat on the walk till Muriel, for peace' sake, paid her driver and dismissed him and got into the Merithew car.

And then that queer man with only one eyebrow and a half pushed forward and asked Mrs. Merithew if she knew where her husband was to be found! And Mrs. Merithew turned to Muriel and made a joke of it, murmuring: "A funny question to ask me!"

Muriel could have told the man where Perry Merithew was, and the struggle to keep from telling him was like a death-wrestle. The car moved away just in time to keep her from shrieking at him what she knew.

And then a horde of newsboys charged on the car, brandishing extras. But Mrs. Merithew would not look at them. She was chattering about the forthcoming *America's Cup* races and supposing that Muriel would see them, of course, from Winnie Nicolls' yacht.

Muriel saw the red headlines:

MERITHEW MURDERED

Already her deed was history. How long would it remain anonymous? But at least the truth was out. That was good! She could breathe. The suffocation of the secret was gone from her lungs. She plucked Mrs. Merithew's sleeve to call her attention to the bulletin. But Mrs. Merithew paid no heed, and Muriel was glad.

They rode on. Muriel wanted to get home at once and hide, for the whole town was alive to the news. She saw the extras everywhere.

But Mrs. Merithew laughingly compelled Muriel to go along with her. She had some new hats to show her. She would not be denied. She would not direct the chauffeur to the Schuyler house. She haled Muriel along, prisoner.

III

THEY reached the Merithew place, and Mrs. Merithew paused laughing on the steps for the door to be opened. An old woman, the housekeeper, astounded Mrs. Merithew by rushing out and taking her in her fat arms, and sobbing:

"Oh, my poor child, my poor child!"

Mrs. Merithew turned to Muriel and laughed—would she never stop laughing!

"What's all this?" she chuckled. "Who's been bothering you now, Mrs. Keating?"

The housekeeper led her into the drawing room and seated her on a divan and sat down by her, to Mrs. Merithew's surprise and indignation.

"There's terrible news for you, dearie," Mrs. Keating said. "Be as brave as you can, wont you, dearie? You will be brave, wont you? These things come to all of us. It's a bitter world."

Mrs. Merithew leaped to her feet and screamed:

"My boy! he's hurt! he's—wha—what's happened to my boy?"

"No, it's not the boy, dearie: it's—it's Mr.—Mr. Merithew."

Mrs. Merithew sank down again almost reassured. And then she got the news as Mrs. Keating sobbed it:

"Well, the master—he's not well—he's had an accident—he's kind of sick—he's—"

"He's dead!" Mrs. Merithew whispered, and toppled over on the old woman's shoulder.

It was unmerciful to bring her back to consciousness. They let her alone, till her weary soul struggled back into her body. And then the hell began. In spite

of Muriel's effort to quiet her, she demanded the truth. She took it as hard as could be. Instantly Perry Merithew, the heartless neglecter of her alone among women, the squanderer whose life had been another Rake's Progress, became the young devoted bridegroom, the pure lover and faithful husband.

One of the maids came running in with an extra that had just reached thus far north. Mrs. Merithew read Hal-lard's story of the mysterious copper-haired woman. She broke from the hands of Mrs. Keating and flung off even Muriel's strong arms. She ran amuck in her mad grief. Muriel called out to the gaping servants:

"Get the doctor at once."

The servants were too panic-stricken with the news and with its effect on Mrs. Merithew to have any wits. They stood about like a mob of frightened, staring children.

Muriel could think of only one doctor's name. She ran to the telephone and called for Clinton Worthing, begged him in heaven's name to come quick. He came in the little car he had bought when he thought he should have a lot of patients.

Worthing had been reading the *Gazette's* Merithew extra when Muriel called him. He guessed what his task would be.

He tried to calm Mrs. Merithew with words, but she pummeled him with her hands and gabbled:

"My husband is dead. He has been murdered. He was the best man that ever lived. Some woman killed him. And I'll kill her. I will. I'll kill her. As soon as I find her, I'll kill her!"

Young Worthing told her that she was quite right to plan such a thing, but she must get her strength first. But he could not drug her with words. He made ready a solution, and while she pounded him with one arm, he held the other, and thrust a needle into her flesh and pressed a little piston-rod and drove nepenthe into her soul. And by and by she grew placid.

Worthing turned to Muriel and said:

"You look pretty bad yourself."

"I'm all right," she answered in a husky tone. There was a grimace on

her drawn face. It was meant for a smile. Worthing answered it with a scowl:

"You're positively green. I'm going to take you home before you keel over. My car's outside."

There was a kind of glory in ordering her about, and in taking her in his car—a poor thing but his own. He drove to the Schuyler house, rang the bell with authority and, entering, took command of the palace.

He said to the maid:

"Undress her and get her to bed."

He did not leave the room. He was a doctor on duty. He busied himself with preparations and instructions.

"Take off her shoes first," he commanded; "and loosen her corsets. Get her to bed. Fill the ice-cap now and the hot water bottle."

Muriel accepted all the maid's services, till the girl put her hands on Muriel's head, saying:

"I'd better take down your hair."

Muriel let out a cry, struck her hand away, and recoiled out of her reach. The maid stared in wonderment, and Worthing reeled before a terrific thought that smote him like a random bullet.

But it glanced from the hard surface of his reason, and left him ashamed rather than suspicious.

CHAPTER XXXVII

MURIEL was trying to excuse herself. She was laughing uncannily, and apologizing to the maid.

"I'm sorry, my dear. I didn't mean to strike you. But I can't bear to have my head jarred this morning. It aches!"

She ran out to her dressing-room. When she came back, she wore a quaintly fetching new-old-fashioned boudoir cap. She was smiling with vigor.

She apologized for her behavior and whispered: "That poor maid gets on my nerves. I can't stand her touch."

"I'll get rid of her," said Worthing, "and get a trained nurse."

"But I don't want a trained nurse!"

"That makes no difference: you get one, all the same."



She ran to the head of the stairs and gazed at the boy. Her knees weakened, and she sat down on the top step
erased his huge smile. He growled: "Aw



JAMES · MONTGOMERY · FLACE

and put out her arms, crying: "Happy! Happy Hanigan, is it you!" The boy paused, and a look of disgust
hell! I was hopin' to supprise you."

It seemed to give Muriel as much pride to be coerced as it did him to coerce. He left her and went back to his office. He telephoned to a club of trained nurses and arranged for one of them to report at Muriel's home. He reported there himself within an hour. The nurse had come and gone already. Muriel's only excuse was:

"I didn't like her."

"What type of nurse do you like?" said Worthing.

"I don't want anybody. I won't have anybody. I'm not ill."

He would have been glad to have her very ill and to save her from exquisite complications by unheard of skill and devotion. He was a doctor before he became a lover. Besides, the lover of him told the doctor of him that if the latter could save her from death, the former might have a chance at her life.

He was disappointed a little when Muriel refused to surrender. He could not imagine how tempted, how ferociously tempted she was to make him indeed the physician of her soul. But she let him go, though she urged him to come back soon.

Then her loneliness was overpowering. Her father and her mother would fight for her, but they must not know.

Now and then she had flashes of impulse to stand forth and settle the mystery. But there were others to consider besides herself. She had no right to blacken the family escutcheon just because Perry Merithew was a scoundrel. She grew bitter against him.

Then she had occasion to look in her hand-bag, which had been lying about unheeded.

She poured the contents on the bed. Out rolled Perry Merithew's ring, and his pearl, his watch and his money.

II

MURIEL fell back from them with a cry, as if she had emptied a nest of little rattlesnakes. And indeed these reliques were almost as dangerous. Yet somehow they seemed to plead for him. The poor fellow had given them to her with a lavish generosity. He had not

been altogether bad. Yet everybody was talking of his vices, and nobody was defending him. The papers were full of his extravagances and escapades, his love affairs and fopperies, his cynical repartees, his brilliant representation of the worst activities of the idle rich. Not a word was printed in his behalf, not a word of excuse or understanding.

It was hideously unfair that these things should not be published. The ring and the pearl and the coins seemed to demand it.

But the moment Muriel resolved to speak, she imagined the result of such a declaration. People would immediately exclaim: "So Muriel Schuyler defends him. She is the only one who does. Why? She'd better be investigated too. Since she knows so much, she must know more."

This drove Muriel away from the plan. And so she re-arrived by another circumlocution at her old resting place: she must not speak. Also she realized the danger of these trinkets. The papers said that the police were searching the pawnshops for them. What if they searched her house? What would be said if they were found in her possession? They would be documents for her conviction.

But where could she hide them? She looked here and there—in this drawer, in that closet, behind the fireplace, under the rugs. No place was safe. Every nook and cranny was liable to be ransacked by the enemies of dust, the house-cleaning brigade.

Suppose she destroyed the things—some day she might be terribly eager to produce them in support of her story.

She opened a sachet bag and stuffed them there, and sewed them in. But the bag seemed suspiciously heavy. The first maid that lifted it would find more than perfumed fluff. Muriel opened the seam and took them out and sewed it up again. She opened a pincushion and cached them there, and the first pin she jabbed in for a test, struck the face of the watch. She took them out again.

She was afraid to have the things on her person, and afraid to have them out of her reach.

Continued on page 395 of this issue.

One Hundred Dollars Reward

PHILO GUBB, the Correspondence School detective, solves the mystery of the Togbury jewel.

By Ellis Parker Butler

The Foremost Humorist in America

ILLUSTRATED BY REA IRVIN



OLD Doctor Fleming, with a humorous twinkle in his eye, tied his horse in front of the Opera House Block and climbed the stairs to the office of Philo Gubb, paper-hanger and graduate of the Rising Sun Correspondence School of Detecting. He chuckled gleefully to himself as he negotiated the steps, and he was still chuckling as he opened Philo Gubb's door and entered the wall-paper-littered room. The paper-hanger-detective turned from his desk and, seeing the doctor, got out of his chair and stood in his full flamingo-like height, gazing at the doctor with his bird-like eyes. "Hello," said Philo Gubb with surprise. "Has Mister Togbury already offered the promise of a reward?"

The doctor chuckled again. "Not yet, but he will soon," smiled the doctor. "Look here, Gubb. This is quite a diamond."

From his pocket he drew his medicine case and from the medicine case he took one of the small glass vials. He removed the cork and emptied its contents into his hand—a large diamond, stained curiously on the surface by blotches of dull red. The blotches were blood, the blood of Jim Waldeck, the rich Mr. Togbury's hired man. Philo Gubb peered at the diamond,

turning his bird-like head from side to side.

"It's a gem of the most serenest ray serene, as the poet says," said Philo Gubb; "aint it?"

"It is," agreed the physician, "and after the way Togbury talked to you last night you are not to take less than one hundred dollars reward for its return. Understand? Until he offers one hundred you will not be able to find it. Is that clear? Because if you agree to take less, you will not get the diamond to return. Is that clear?"

"Certainly sure," said Philo Gubb. "When am I to begin following a clue to where it is?"

"Right now," said the physician with a grin. "I have just been up to the hospital and I drove down to take you up there to see Jim Waldeck and make things nice and pleasant for him. I hate to see a hero neglected, especially one of these fine old-style faithful family servitors. We mustn't neglect Jim Waldeck."

Philo Gubb's telephone bell rang—two long and three short rings—and he went to the instrument, neatly screwed to his wall. Mr. Togbury himself was on the wire. Mr. Gubb listened patiently.

"No, Mister Togbury," he said at length. "I couldn't start beginning to think of looking for that diamond for no reward of ten dollars. A detective is worthy of his hire, and a diamond is as small as a needle in a haystack when you come to hunting up where it is. If a barn was to be stole, or anything as big as a barn, a detective might take



the job of finding out where it was for ten dollars, but a small little object like—" He hung up the receiver and turned away. "He rung me off," he said.

"Give him time! Give him time!" chuckled the doctor. "Get into your coat and come with me."

The Togbury mystery occupied a prominent place in all the Riverbank papers that morning—"all" being a mere expression, for there was but one morning paper. Mr. and Mrs. Togbury had been spending the day at Derlingport, leaving faithful Jim Waldeck, their hired man, to sleep on a cot in the parlor as protection for their valuables. During the night two burglars entered the house, but Jim Waldeck had given them a furious battle. They stabbed him in the shoulder, making a deep, clean wound, and locked him in the telephone closet in the hall. Then they pried the celebrated Togbury diamond from its setting in the middle of a brooch and disappeared. For a while poor, faithful Jim Waldeck lay weltering in his own blood in the closet. Then he raised himself and telephoned to the police, but the police were asleep. He telephoned to Philo Gubb, who roused the police and took him with him, meeting good old Dr. Fleming, who was returning from a night call. Jim Waldeck had, however, already telephoned for another doctor—Dr. Wick, his friend, who was considered by many a mere quack—and when Gubb, the policeman and Dr. Fleming reached the Togbury house they found Dr. Wick on the spot, together with Mr. and Mrs. Togbury, who had returned from Derlingport on a late train.

This, with a reporter's gusto, was told in the *Morning Eagle*, but what was not told was what Dr. Fleming had discovered and told to Philo Gubb. Dr. Wick had almost fought to be the man to handle Jim Waldeck's shoulder wound, but Dr. Fleming had won and, with Jim on the kitchen table, had probed the wound. Pushed deep into it he had found the Togbury diamond, and he had quickly removed it, unknown to Jim Waldeck. He sewed up the unimportant wound, hid the diamond in his pocket and, because Mr. Togbury had spoken with uncalled-

for offense to Philo Gubb and had offended the doctor, the doctor carried the diamond away with him. Jim Waldeck he sent to the hospital where he could keep an eye on him. Dr. Wick he sent about his business.

The whole affair was as clear as day to Dr. Fleming. Wick and Waldeck had planned the robbery together. Wick had put cocaine on the knife in order that it might not cause pain as Jim made the self-inflicted wound. Wick had shown Waldeck the spot on his shoulder where the wound could be made without great harm. Wick had expected to be the only doctor on the spot and to remove the diamond from the wound and make away with it, while Jim Waldeck would pose as a heroic defender of Mr. Togbury's property. The coming of Dr. Fleming had spoiled the plan temporarily, and the sewing up of the wound disgruntled Dr. Wick. Dr. Wick saw unpleasant work ahead. Under Dr. Fleming's care the wound would heal, and it might be quite a task to get Jim Waldeck to consent to have his shoulder cut open again for the removal of the jewel. A man, however brave he may be when first inflicting a wound on himself, is apt to have a distaste for being cut into again. No wonder Dr. Fleming chuckled. He had the diamond. He had the thief safe in a hospital where his word was law. He had the paper-hanger-detective ready to "discover" the diamond when the proper time came. He had Mr. Togbury in a position where he must open his close fist and pay a reward of real money if he would recover the diamond. He had Jim Waldeck in a position where he would be anything but happy. And he had the quack Wick in a position where, if he hoped to profit by the night's work, he must persuade Waldeck to be cut into. Yes, Dr. Fleming had reason to chuckle gleefully.

The doctor, wrapped in his great bearskin coat, led the way to his buggy.

"Gubb," he said, "this is going to be one of the most triumphant pieces of detective work of your career."

"Undoubtedly sure," agreed Philo Gubb, but he said it doubtfully.

"I can say, safely," grinned the doctor, "that you are the only detective in the

world that can solve this mystery. But it is going to be hard work for you. Even you, with all twelve lessons of the Rising Sun Detective School's correspondence course in your pocket, are going to have a tough time finding the diamond."

"Am I?" asked Philo Gubb, seeking enlightenment.

"You are," said the doctor positively. "How many disguises have you?"

"Number one, farmer; number two, undertaker; number three,—if you use the blue overalls,—plumber,—if you use the torn pants,—tramp; number four—"

"No matter. About twenty, hey?"

"There or thereabouts," said Philo Gubb.

"All right, you are going to use all of them," said the doctor. "Perhaps you will have to get some others. This search is going to be all disguised up. You're going to pop up from behind fences and from behind bushes and out of doorways wherever Doc Wick goes. You're going to haunt that poor quack like a ghost."

"The technical designation of the term is to shadow and not to haunt," said Philo Gubb.

"Well, you'll shadow him all right enough," said the doctor. "And clues! My! but you'll find a lot of clues! Buttons. And bones. And bark scraped off trees. And—say! I've an idea! You'll find some clues that point directly to—"

"In the detective literature of the world," said Philo Gubb, "clues don't most generally point — they lead."

The detective nearly drove Jim crazy.



"All right, lead, then. You'll find oodles of clues that lead directly to old close-fist Togbury himself. Hey? You'll have him hopping. You'll have him so stirred up he'll offer a hundred dollars reward just to show he didn't steal the stone from his wife himself. How's that? Gubb, we're going to have a lot of fun. I didn't know how much fun we were going to have. This will be the greatest detective mystery of the age. I'll put the clues around and you'll find them, hey? And you'll be as secretive as a clam in the mud. You'll be as mum as a lead monkey. And I'll be the friend of the press and make a monkey of you. I'll worm out of you everything you're doing, and give it to the newspaper boys. Or say! We'll have the newspaper boys follow you around and write down what you do as you do it. How's that?"

"It aint how the deteckative work is most usually dope generally," said Philo Gubb.

"No," said Doctor Fleming, "but as a general thing a detective is working for an offered reward and not to have a reward offered. Come on up and see my heroic patient suffer."

Jim Waldeck, through the influence of Dr. Fleming, was in a private room of the hospital. Through Dr. Fleming's influence, also, a husky orderly sat at the door to warn visitors away from the patient—particularly to warn Dr. Wick away. The orderly arose and touched his cap as Dr. Fleming and Philo Gubb approached.

"Mike," said the doctor, "this is my friend Gubb, the detective. Let Gubb see Jim any time he wants to see him."

Sometimes you may not know Gubb; he may come in disguise. If he does he will use a password. What word will you use, Gubb?"

"Appendixitis," said Mr. Gubb.

"Good!" said the doctor. "Gubb will say 'appendixitis' and raise his left hand—hey, Gubb? Not 'appendicitis' and the right hand, understand? 'Appendixitis' and the left hand. How's the patient been?"

"Cantankerous," said Mike.

"Tut! tut!" exclaimed the doctor. "Can't have that. In what way?"

"Well," said Mike judiciously, as one using care in describing symptoms, "he wanted to get out of bed and telephone to Doc Wick, and when Miss Mullins called me in he offered to chew my ear off if I came nigh the bed. That's what I call cantankerous, if you ask me."

Dr. Fleming examined Mike's ears.

"Yes," he said gravely, "that's cantankerosity, but not acute cantankerosity. If he *had* chewed your ear off, I should have called it acute. Now I call it cantankerosity in a mild form. I'll give him something for it."

"What'll you give him?" asked Mike, grinning.

"Advice," said Dr. Fleming, and he led the way into the sunny private room where Jim Waldeck lay in a spotless bed. The patient raised his head and scowled as he saw Philo Gubb. The doctor took a chair at the side of the bed.

"Jim," he said, "we get impatient lying here in bed, don't we? We get restless and irritable, don't we? Quite natural, Jim, for a man of your active, heroic, burglar-fighting disposition. But, Jim, do you notice anything about Mike's ears?"

"I didn't notice his ears *at all*," said Jim crossly.

"Thought you might have noticed them, seeing you threatened to chew them off," said the doctor pleasantly. "No! no! I'm not complaining about your little earnest desire to chew them! That's all right! Patients feel that way sometimes. Why, a couple of years ago we had three orderlies in this hospital

with chewed-off ears. I had to have some rubber ears made for them—ears the patients that felt irritable could chew at will. Used to order these rubber ears by the gross. Sometimes, on muggy days, when everyone felt peevish, there would be whole rows of patients in the wards, all chewing rubber ears."

"Huh!" said Jim scornfully.

"But that got too expensive," continued the doctor gravely. "The Economy Committee of the Board of Trustees shut down on it. So now we paint the orderlies' ears with bichloride of mercury. It serves a double purpose. Fine antiseptic. If a patient chews a bichlorided ear, the ear is not infected. And a great poison—a deadly poison. The patient that chews the ear dies. He *always* dies. Except, of course, when the kidney treatment succeeds. We *always* try the kidney treatment."

"What's the kidney treatment?" asked Jim weakly.

"Just a simple little operation," explained the doctor in a kindly tone. "We open the patient and remove the kidneys; then we peel off the outer layer of kidney and replace the kidneys. I can say that not a patient on whom I have tried that operation has ever died of bichloride poison."

"They get well?" asked Jim more hopefully.

"Well? I should say not! They don't get well, but they don't die of the poison. The operation kills them. But I just told you so that if you *did* want to chew Mike's ears you'd know you need not fear dying of poison. How does the wound inflicted by that scoundrelly burglar feel now?"

"It's sore," said Jim complainingly.

"Sore, is it?" asked the doctor forcing a frown. "That's strange. Nice, clean incision wound, that was. I wonder—"

"What do you wonder?" asked Jim uneasily.

"I was just wondering," said the doctor, "whether there could be any foreign body in the wound—a chip off the point of the dagger, for example—anything sharp edged and irritating. I wonder if I hadn't better open the wound again and make sure there's no foreign body in it!"



"If Doc Wick could open it—" began Jim.

"If Doc Wick sets foot in this hospital, I'll have him chloroformed and cremated in the furnace in the cellar," said Dr. Fleming with vigor. "I'll pull the basting-threads out of that wound and open it myself."

"Now, Doc! Wait!" said Jim, raising himself in bed. "Just hold on! There's no foreign body in that wound at all. If there was I could feel it, couldn't I? I ought to know. It aint a foreign-body kind of sore. It's a—"

"Feeling of continuous soreness, from top to bottom of the wound, hey?"

"Just so!" said Jim eagerly. "You hit it. That's how it feels."

"Sounds like cocaine to me," said the doctor gravely.



"What do you mean?" asked Jim quickly, knowing that Dr. Wick had co-cained the stiletto to prevent pain.

"Your diagnosis would indicate cocaine poisoning," said the doctor. "I wonder if I could have spilled cocaine on my probe somehow. If I got cocaine in that wound I'd never forgive myself. You see," he said, turning to Philo Gubb, "if cocaine got in that wound it would suppurate—fill up with matter like a boil—and possibly come to head like a boil. But that would take care of any foreign matter that might happen to be in the wound."

"Why?" demanded Jim.

"It would throw it off. Say it was a rifle bullet in the wound. The wound would suppurate, and some time, probably when you were asleep and didn't know it, it would throw out the foreign matter—the rifle bullet. Maybe you would groan in your sleep and the nurse would come, and there would be the rifle bullet lying beside the wound. That's one way the system gets rid of foreign bodies embedded in the tissues."

Jim Waldeck, thinking of the precious diamond he imagined was still in the wound, turned white.

"What—what's the other way?" he demanded.

"Travel," said Dr. Fleming. "Omitting the technical terms, I'll call it travel. It has happened a million times to soldiers shot in a war.

A man is shot in the shoulder, say, where you have this wound. The shoulder does not want the bullet there—has no use for a rifle bullet, anyway; it says 'Move on, you!' and the bullet has to move. It starts traveling. No part of the system wants it. It has to keep traveling. It moves from one spot to another, and then, some day, it decides it is in a mighty unfriendly country and tries to get out. It comes up to the skin. Patient feels a hard lump on the back of his heel, say. He goes to a doctor and has the lump cut out—there's Mr. Bullet."

The doctor looked at Jim critically and decided he was not going to faint.

"That's why we probe as soon as we can after a wound is made," he continued. "If we don't, the foreign body is apt to get away from us, and a man can't chase all through a patient's body with a probe trying to find a foreign body that is traveling around like a tourist in Europe, and you can't tell how fast a foreign body will travel."

Philo Gubb was almost as interested as Jim Waldeck.

"How fast would—a—a precious stone travel?" he asked.

The doctor saw the eager look on Jim's face.

"A precious stone?" he asked. "A ruby, or something like that, cut the way they cut them to set in rings? Oh, pretty fairly fast! Of course, if a cut stone like a ruby started to work its way across from a man's shoulder to his other shoulder it wouldn't be expected to get there in a day, or in a week. It might take years, before it crowded up to the skin, or it



might work right up and show as a hard lump in a couple of weeks."

"Can—can you feel it traveling?" asked Jim. "Can you tell what direction it is taking by the feel of it?"

"I never heard you could," said Dr. Fleming.

"Oh!" said Jim, as if that satisfied his inquisitiveness. He dropped on the pillow and stared at the ceiling. He was exceedingly unhappy.

"Feeling sick?" asked the doctor kindly.

Jim did not answer. He flopped over onto his side and turned his back on the doctor, and his two visitors left him there. Not until he was sure they were gone did he turn back and raise his head. The nurse, thinking he might want a drink, came to the bedside. A look of unutterable hate was on his face.

"See here!" he growled. "That Doc Fleming—I want to know something about him."

"What is it?" asked the nurse pleasantly.

"What I want to know is, does he paint *his* ears with that bichloride stuff or don't he? All I want is to know that!"

Miss Mullen moved to the door, keeping an eye on Jim.

"Mike," she said to the orderly, "don't go far away. The patient is delirious."

THE wound in Jim Waldeck's shoulder healed rapidly and beautifully, but the seed of imagination Dr. Fleming had planted in his brain grew with equal rapidity and beauty. In a week Jim was discharged from the hospital as cured; but he was a most unhappy well man. His actions, too, became eccentric. Instead of blushing with honest pride when some citizen praised his heroic defense of Mr. Togbury's home, Jim tried to sneak away. He was worried by the guilty man's fear that the words of praise had some ulterior meaning. But this was not the worst of his trials. The correspondence-school detective nearly drove him crazy. At all times of the day and night Philo Gubb would appear from behind walls and trees, out of doorways and shadows, disguised as anything from a pork-butcher to a washerwoman, and

gaze at Jim with serious, reproachful, bird-like eyes. The paper-hanger-detective would drop from a tree when Jim was shoveling snow and mutely compare a button in his hand with the buttons on Jim's coat, and then steal silently away. He would appear from behind the stable and measure Jim's snowy footprint with a foot rule.

Even more nerve-annoying was the imaginary diamond. From the time the wound healed and he no longer feared that it would suppurate and lay the diamond on his pillow as damping evidence of his guilt, Jim began to imagine he could feel the gem traveling through his system. There were times when he stood perfectly still, perfectly rigid, and tried to feel the diamond moving through his system. Sometimes he was sure he could feel it creeping slowly across his back.

It is a horrible sensation to endure, the sensation that you have a rose-cut diamond touring through your body and not to know whether it is going north-by-east or sou'-sou'-west. It is horrible not to know whether the eager tourist is now in your left leg or about to drop from somewhere into your abdominal cavity with a dull thud. Jim acquired a habit of feeling himself from head to foot every night and every morning, seeking a small hard lump that would indicate that the diamond was coming to the surface. He was an unhappy hired man if ever there was one.

But his greatest misery came from Dr. Wick. Jim would awaken in the night in a cold sweat from a dream of Doc Wick in which Doc Wick had caught him and screwed him in a vise and was about to jab a knife into him in sundry places in an attempt to find the diamond, or in which Doc Wick was about to run him through a sausage grinder. These dreams had a foundation. Doc Wick *did* want to jab a knife into him.

To Doc Wick the shadowings of the paper-hanger-detective were even more annoying than they were to Jim Waldeck. Jim believed he carried the stolen diamond buried in his shoulder, or somewhere in his system, and that was bad enough, but Jim had the satisfaction of thinking he had the diamond. Doc Wick did not have that satisfaction. He had

planned a clever robbery, had nagged Jim Waldeck's courage to the point where it let Jim do the deed, and now what? The diamond was all Jim's—it was walking around when Jim walked around; it was going to bed when Jim went to bed; and—or so Doc Wick believed—any time Jim wanted to get away from Riverbank he could vamoose and take the diamond with him. So Doc Wick had but two objects in life. One was to get the diamond out of Jim Waldeck's system and to get it out soon. The other was to avoid Philo Gubb.

If Philo Gubb shadowed Jim Waldeck, there is hardly a word that expresses what he did to Doc Wick. To Doc Wick it seemed as if Gubb only left him long enough to change disguises. Every morning Gubb reported at Dr. Fleming's office and received his schedule for the day. It would run like this:

9 to 9:30—Haunt Jim
9:30 to 10—Find the safety-pin clue
10 to 11—Haunt Doc Wick
11 to 11:30—Haunt Togbury
11:30 to 12—Haunt Jim

Every hour of the day was covered by the schedules prepared by Dr. Fleming; and Gubb was like a flying squadron—now here, now there, now elsewhere; so that, while none of his victims knew where he was at all times, they imagined he was not far away at any time. This made it difficult for Doc Wick to talk diamond to Jim Waldeck, but when he found an opportunity, he made good use of it. He talked to Jim like a Dutch uncle, as the saying is.

"Now, Jim," he would say, "you've got to be square with me, and you aint being square. We were to share and share alike, and what are you doing? You're keeping the whole diamond. You've got the diamond embedded into you and I aint got nothing."

"Well, I wish it was embedded into you, if that would suit you," Jim would reply with resentment. "It aint no fun to have a diamond healed up in yourself, and wandering around in yourself. I blame you, Doc! I blame you hard. You was to get the diamond out of the wound immediately quick. And did you? No! You let Doc Fleming sew it up into me,

and you let it heal up into me. I blame you, Doc."

"Now, hold on!" Doc Wick would reply. "Look how quick you healed up. If you'd had any sense you'd have kept that wound open until I had a chance to dig the diamond out of it. If you'd been square with me you'd have kept fussing that wound, and irritating it, and kept it so sore this Doc Fleming would have got sick of you and turned you out of the hospital. But did you? No! You had a soft snap. You had a fine bed, and plenty to eat and a pretty nurse to wait on you, and you just lay there in a hospital bed and healed up. You didn't care nothing about me bein' half owner of that diamond at all."

"I wont be cut into!" Jim would say positively.

"Now! Now be reasonable!" Doc Wick would urge. "I got a thin little instrument here that wont hurt you at all. I can lance into your shoulder and have that diamond out in a jiffy, and you wont know I've cut you, hardly."

"You'll lance nothin'," Jim would reply hotly. "You'll lance into my shoulder, will you? Well, maybe that diamond has gallivanted down into my left leg by now. Am I going to let you lance into me all over my body, like a feller borin' holes all over a county for to strike oil? I wont stand for it, Doc. No, sir! Some day that diamond will come to the surface like a pimple and that'll be plenty of time to slice into me."

"See here," Doc Wick would say after a moment, "you can talk about that diamond gallivanting all through your system but how about yourself? Our agreement was that half that diamond would be mine if we could get it, and I went to all the trouble of arranging a plan for you and now what have I got? Nothing. The diamond isn't in me, is it? It's in you, and what's to stop you from getting away from here and carrying the diamond away with you? Come on now, Jim, be a good fellow and let me cut it out of you."

"I wont be cut into," Jim would say stubbornly. "You've got to wait until that diamond comes to my surface. Or else—"

"Or else what?"

"Well, maybe," Jim would say, "if it works around and gets into my appendix I'll let you cut into me anyway. If I feel it floppin' down into my appendix I'll let you cut. A feller ought to have his appendix cut out anyway if anything gets into it, and I might as well have it cut out for a diamond as for an apple seed. Who is that?"

"That" was usually Philo Gubb, snooping, and Jim and Doc Wick would part hurriedly, trying to look innocent and calm. They felt the necessity of trying to appear innocent when two reporters were easily seen at tactical distance behind Philo Gubb, ready to rush forward and inquire of the paper-hanger-detective why he was shadowing Jim and Doc Wick. For obvious reasons both Jim and Doc Wick treated Philo Gubb with the greatest courtesy and consideration. Not so Mr. Togbury.

Whenever Mr. Togbury caught sight of Philo Gubb his face flared as red as a turkey's wattles. One reason was that Mr. Togbury's boast that the local police would soon discover and return the missing diamond had proved merely a boast, and another was that, by the time spring had melted the last February snow, Mr. Gubb had had the pleasure of refusing fifty dollars reward for the return of the lost diamond. But the greatest reason of all was that Philo Gubb persisted in discovering clues. When, for instance, Mr. Togbury raised the proffered reward to twenty-five dollars and Philo Gubb, seeming to consider the proposition, asked to see the brooch from which the diamond had been taken, Mr. Gubb discovered a gray hair caught in the prongs of the brooch. He had remarked that it was suspiciously like one of Mr. Togbury's hairs. He begged leave to have a hair from Mr. Togbury's head, and, a day later, he had refused to find the diamond for Mr. Togbury for twenty-five dollars and had remarked that the hair found in the brooch was one of Mr. Togbury's hairs.

"My hair!" exclaimed Mr. Togbury furiously. "And what if it is my hair? What has that got to do with it? I didn't steal my own wife's diamond, did I?"

"Cases has been known to detective science where a man has purloined away

from himself his own goods and chattels," said Philo Gubb.

"Why, you—you—you—" stammered Mr. Togbury in his rage. "Do you mean to say I— Nonsense! Infernal nonsense!"

"I don't intend to mean to say nothing about nothing whatsoever," said Philo Gubb. "I only mean to say that a clue is a clue, even if it is a hair. Now, this one on the back of your coat—"

"What's on the back of my coat?" demanded Mr. Togbury fiercely, trying to look over his shoulder.

"Nothing but a hair," said Philo Gubb. "A yellow hair. And a yellow hair aint a clue in this case, because it might have got onto your coat five minutes ago and have nothing whatsoever to do with no robbery by no manner of means. But if your wife was considering the reasonableness of suing for divorce and her hair was brown turning to gray, a detectative would consider a yellow hair on your coat a real good clue. But it aint a clue to who stole the diamond, because you aint the sort of gent that would steal a diamond from your wife to give to a lady friend."

Mr. Togbury could only sputter in his rage, but when the two local reporters a few minutes later asked him if he cared to give the press any word regarding his interview with Philo Gubb he was so angry he could not even sputter.

"He'll come up! He'll come up!" Dr. Fleming chuckled when Gubb reported this. "When he showed you the brooch did you notice whose name was gold-printed in the lid of the case?"

"I didn't take notice to look to see," admitted Philo Gubb.

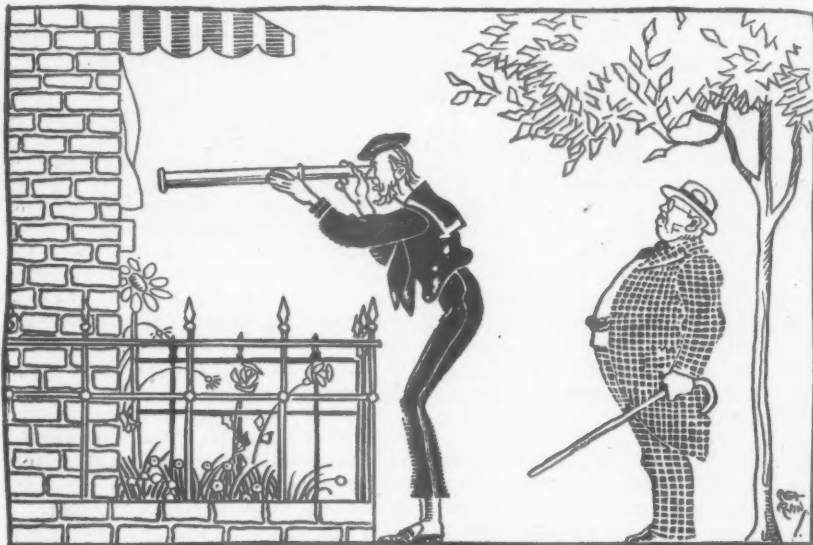
"You think you didn't, but you did," said the doctor. "You noticed that the name was Jenkins the Jeweler, and you saw that was a good clue, and now you are going out to follow it. You're going to ask Jenkins about it. You're going to learn from Jenkins that Mrs. Togbury bought the diamond herself, and that as soon as old Togbury knew she had it he brought it back to Jenkins and wanted him to buy it back. You're going to discover that, and then the reporters are going to hear it from you, and they are going up to interview old Togbury about

it. They are going to ask him why he wanted to get rid of the diamond and if he had thought since then of getting rid of it. And then you'll drop in on him and ask him when he had the brooch in his hand last before the robbery. That's what you are going to do next, Gubb."

"Into what disguise had I better get to perform the operation?" asked Philo.

"You might go as a Swedish restaurant cook out of work," said the doctor, and Philo Gubb adopted the suggestion. If he had gone as a schoolboy in short

"I'm glad to hear that," said the doctor, feigning relief. "This man Gubb—well, I don't know—it seems to me he has an idea you hired Jim to steal that diamond. It's nonsense, of course. He's an awful stupid man, that Gubb. He has some idea that you didn't want your wife to have the diamond and fixed up some hocus-pocus with Jim to get it away from her. Silly idea and I told Gubb so. I told him to keep still or the thing would be all over town, but he said that finding the new clue made him dead sure."



Philo, disguised as a deep-sea sailor, was peering into the window.

breeches, the effect on Mr. Togbury would have been the same. He glared at Philo Gubb for a minute and then ordered him out of the house. But an hour later he raised his reward to fifty dollars.

"Togbury," said Dr. Fleming, when he met the close-fisted old gentleman on the street a few weeks later, "I see that Jim Waldeck has a new suit of clothes."

"Well, I didn't give him the money," snapped Togbury viciously. "My wife was fool enough to think he ought to be rewarded for doing what was his plain duty. He was paid regular wages to watch the house. I didn't give him a cent extra for fighting burglars or for anything else."

"What clue?" asked Mr. Togbury with a sick sensation.

"Your thumb-print on the dresser drawer your wife kept the brooch in," said the doctor.

"Well, what of that? What if my thumb-print was on the drawer?" demanded Mr. Togbury angrily. "I have a right to have my thumb-print anywhere in my house, haven't I?"

"That's what I told Gubb," said Dr. Fleming soothingly. "And I told him more than that. I told him he had no right to argue that because Jim Waldeck left town this morning you had sent him away. I told him Jim had probably gone on some business and would be

back to-night. Just because a man's hired man goes away on a train is no reason for suspecting his employer of trying to get him out of town to hide a crime."

Mr. Togbury stared with open mouth. It was news to him that Jim Waldeck had fled. He turned on his heel and that day raised his proffered reward to seventy-five dollars. Dr. Fleming chuckled when he heard. But Jim had indeed fled. Worried by the shadowing of Philo Gubb, Doctor Wick had become more and more insistent on an immediate translation of Jim into a diamond mine, with the necessary delving into his system with a knife, and Jim, in fear of his life, had departed for distant safety. To this day the poor fellow is in fear of the appearance of Doc Wick, and he still searches his own surface, night and morning, for the small hard lump that will mean that the diamond has worked its way up under his skin.

On the seventh of June, Mr. Togbury, returning to his home, saw Dr. Fleming's rig standing before his door and Philo Gubb, disguised as a deep-sea sailor, leaning against the fence, peering into Mr. Togbury's parlor window through a brass telescope. The doctor's rig did not worry him. Mrs. Togbury was having one of her headaches and must have sent for the physician; but the eternal shadowing and snooping of the Correspondence School detective was becoming maddening. He turned and saw the two young newspaper men waiting patiently on the curb across the street. He turned toward Philo Gubb. His first intention was to order him away angrily, but he did not do so.

"See here, you!" he said. "Do you or don't you know anything about this diamond? Are you carrying on like the tail end of a comic-opera chorus just to annoy me, or do you know something?"

Philo Gubb lowered the telescope and stared at Mr. Togbury in silence.

"Well," asked Mr. Togbury, "what do you know?"

"I know," said Philo Gubb slowly, "that seventy-five dollars isn't a proper pecuniary monetary reward for to be of-

fered for a diamond of the valuable worth of the Togbury diamond."

Mr. Togbury looked at Philo Gubb keenly.

"Gubb," he said slowly, "I'll give you one hundred dollars if you can tell me where that diamond is."

Detective Gubb took up the telescope and looked in at Mr. Togbury's parlor window once more. He saw, through the door between the parlor and the hall, Dr. Fleming softly close the door of the telephone closet. He saw Dr. Fleming chuckle gleefully. He lowered the telescope.

"My terms for detective work are cash money in advance," he said. Mr. Togbury took out his purse and counted the money into Mr. Gubb's hand. Mr. Gubb raised the telescope again and looked through it.

"If you wouldn't mind waiting a quarter of a minute whilst I finish up the final investigation into this case," he said, "I can render you a report onto the spot."

He stared through the telescope. Mr. Togbury stared at Philo Gubb. The two reporters stared at Mr. Togbury and Mr. Gubb jointly. Dr. Fleming came from the house and nodded cheerfully toward the two men.

"Into your telephone closet in the hall," said Mr. Gubb, "your winter overcoat that you had on the night of the robbery is hanging onto a hook. The diamond is in the pocket of the coat."

It was, for Dr. Fleming had just put it there. Mr. Togbury gasped.

"What—what is that, anyway?" he demanded. "Is that an X-ray machine?"

Detective Gubb slowly closed the telescope.

"The modern up-to-date detective person," he said with dignity, "uses many scientific instruments unknownst to the common ordinary human individual."

Dr. Fleming approached, smiling.

"Howdy, Togbury. Hello, Gubb," he said. "How is the great Togbury jewel case progressing?"

"Very well and good," said Detective Gubb. "It has just been immediately finished completely up."

"Henry" is the title of the story of the most baffling mystery Philo Gubb ever encountered. Read it in the July Red Book Magazine, on the news-stands June 23rd. There's a laugh to the line in **"Henry"**



The palmist, who had stared at ten thousand palms, was startled out of his usual calm by the evidence of good luck which he saw.

The Rose-Pink Wind of Love

THE story of the strange adventure of the gunner's mate from the U. S. S. Paducah.

By James Francis Dwyer

Author of the Hochdorf stories.

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM OBERHARDT

PETER SHERMAN KENNEDY, chief gunner's mate of the U. S. S. *Paducah*, knew nothing of the three great winds that govern the world, till he missed his ship at Port Said. That disastrous happening came about through the inability of Peter's luckless watch to perform its duties after a quantity of salt water had invaded its works. It was the clock in the Continental Hotel that

called Peter's attention to the vagaries of his timepiece. It informed him that it was full two hours nearer midnight than his watch would admit; and before Peter's mind rose a horrifying picture of the *Paducah* steaming slowly down the canal to Suez.

When Peter made the discovery, he was having his hand examined by an Arab skilled in palmistry. The Arab interested Peter. He had found upon Mr.

Kennedy's palm certain lines which indicated plainly that Peter was one of the luckiest men in the whole wide world. The palmist, who had stared at ten thousand palms, was startled out of his usual calm by the evidence of great good luck which he saw. Every little curly line seemed to be a lariat by which Peter could lasso the god of good fortune, and a soft glow went over Peter Sherman Kennedy as he listened. The Arab was winding up a wonderful speech concerning the golden future that awaited Peter when Peter's eyes fell upon the clock.

Mr. Kennedy tore his big hand away from the Arab and let out a yell which echoed through the place. "Holy St. Christopher!" he screamed. "It's ten o'clock, an' the ship's gone!"

He sprang into a waiting carriage in front of the hotel. The driver had informed him an hour before that the lean smoke in the shafts bore the name of "Yankee Doodle," and now Peter tested "Yankee Doodle's" speed as he screamed instructions.

"To the water-front!" he roared. "Skidoo! Pronto! Beat it!"

Peter stood up in the carriage and flailed "Yankee Doodle" with a cane of rhinoceros hide which he had purchased for four shillings from an itinerant hawker at the Casino Palace Hotel, and the driver screamed out curses and protests as "Yankee Doodle" extended himself. At a gait that he had not registered for many years, "Yankee Doodle" dragged Peter Sherman to the waterfront, and the gunner's mate sprang from the carriage and clutched a customs guard by the arm.

"The *Paducah*?" he roared. "The *Paducah*?"

"She gone," said the brown-faced guard. "She gone one hour ago."

Peter Sherman Kennedy stood stunned by the news; then he rushed to the carriage. The winded "Yankee Doodle" shied away from him, and the driver muttered a malediction in Arabic.

"Back!" roared Peter. "Back to the Continental! That paw-reading devil of a palmist said that I was the luckiest man in the world. Now I'll show him what a thief and a liar he is!"

Once again "Yankee Doodle" covered

the distance between the waterfront and the Continental at what Peter Sherman termed a twenty-six-knot gait. Peter hurled himself from the carriage, gave one glance at the dimly-lit colonnade, and then, with a roar of anger, pounced upon the palmist who had painted for him the aureate future.

The Arab was at that moment following the line of the moon on the white palm of a young lady reclining in one of the big cane chairs. Peter, blind with wrath, did not see the client; he saw only the brown man who had told him that he was as lucky as the blind beggar whose fingers turned into gold the stones that were flung at him; and Peter sprang upon the unlucky seer, gripped his neck, shook him fiercely, and then hurled him unceremoniously into the roadway.

"You black-faced thief!" roared Peter. "I'll teach you to tell me I'm the luckiest man in the world! Sure, if you knew anything about the future, you'd have known that the moment I found the *Paducah* gone I'd come back here to dust your brown skin for you!"

The Arab took one backward glance at Peter and dashed into the middle of the road. And at that moment a silvery laugh came to Mr. Kennedy's ears.

Peter Sherman turned and looked at the person who found humor in the story of his misfortunes. He saw a young lady possessed of more than ordinary beauty, and she was evidently alone. That she was not disconcerted by the happening was evident, for her clear laugh rang out again as Peter stared at her.

Gunner's Mate Kennedy was profuse in his apologies. "I'm sorry," he cried. "Faith, I forgot he was talking to you, ma'am. Wait a moment: I'll bring the nigger back to finish his job!"

Before she could protest, Peter Sherman dashed out into the roadway. The Arab, thinking that he was to receive further chastisement, fled down the dark side-street. But he was not fleet enough. Peter overhauled him, gripped him by the neck and dragged him back onto the colonnade, the young lady vainly trying to suppress her laughter.

"Finish your job!" yelled Peter. "Finish it at once—though it's nothing but

lies that you tell everybody that's fool enough to listen to you!"

The young lady tried to control her features. "I think it would be better fun to hear him give an explanation to you," she said, looking up at Peter Sherman. "My future is a pretty prosaic one, according to his reading, but if he said that you were the luckiest man in the world, he should have a reason for the misfortune which has suddenly come to you."

Spluttering, the Arab cried out that he had an excuse, and Peter, still clutching his neck, ordered him to produce it.

"Cough it up!" he cried. "Tell me why you said I was the luckiest man in the world, you idiot, and the *Paducah* steaming down the canal while you were saying it."

"I no can tell of the Three Winds," whispered the Arab in a fear-stricken voice.

"Of what Three Winds?" asked Peter.

"Of the Three Winds that rule the world," murmured the seer.

"Is it the trade winds you mean?"

The palmist shook his head. "I mean the Three Great Winds," he said. "The Golden Wind of Luck, the Rose-pink Wind of Love and the Black Wind of Misfortune."

"What about them?" asked Kennedy.

"I cannot see them, and I cannot tell when they will pounce upon one," said the seer solemnly. "I read the future, yes, but if either of the Three Winds strikes a person whose future I have read, all my knowledge is useless. The Black Wind of Misfortune has struck you, and what I told you is—*poof!*"

The Arab snapped his fingers in a dramatic manner, and Peter and the young lady looked at each other.

"There's something in that," said the gunner's mate.

"It is wonderful!" cried the girl. "Please tell me more about the Three Winds."

"They rule the world," gasped the palmist. "They touch the faces of all at some time or other. I, Mohammed Ali, have said it. The Golden Wind of Luck, the Rose-pink Wind of Love and the Black Wind of Misfortune. The two

first are greater than the last. For you,"—he turned to Peter and flung out his hand with a dramatic gesture,—"for you there is one hope."

"There's *no* hope!" cried Peter. "The *Paducah* is gone."

"There is one hope," repeated the Arab, his big brown eyes fixed upon the navy man's face. "Either the Golden Wind of Luck or the Rose-pink Wind of Love must strike you to free you from the other."

"Then the sooner the better," said Peter. "It's a good story you tell, so I'll let you slide."

The Arab gave a sigh of relief and once again squatted upon the floor of the colonnade. He took the hand of the girl and, as if nothing unusual had happened, proceeded to explain to her what he saw marked upon it.

Peter Sherman Kennedy, not wishing to overhear, touched his cap and marched away.

THE gunner's mate walked up and down the streets till midnight. He would have given ten years of his life to meet a jackie bearing upon his cap-band the word *Paducah*. As twelve o'clock chimed, Peter Sherman pulled out the watch which had cruelly betrayed him. Its hands marked the hour of eight, and Peter's wrath was so great that he sent the timepiece flying into the night.

The watch had hardly left his hand when a scream of pain came out of the darkness. And Peter immediately knew what had produced the scream. A fat Arab, in an effort to cool himself, had seated himself on the top step of a little stone stairway, and the discarded watch had struck him full in the face.

As the cry of expressed pain and surprise bored into the quiet night, Peter fled precipitately.

A lean policeman appeared immediately in front. Peter tried to dodge. The officer made a spring for him. Kennedy ducked and fell upon his knees, and the policeman went over his back.

Peter sped on down the dark street. The policeman had picked himself up and was following at full speed. The yells of the fat Arab and the shouts of

the pursuing officer woke the echoes of the night.

Peter gasped out maledictions on his luck as he ran. "The palmist was right," he said. "It's the Black Wind of Misfortune that has struck me in real earnest."

By a strategic movement, he evaded another policeman who appeared out of the darkness. Then he dived into a dark, evil-smelling lane, stumbled over the bodies of a dozen sleeping porters who were waiting for the opening of the early fruit- and vegetable-market, and sped on.

He halted, as he reached the waterfront, and listened. He had out-distanced his pursuers. No yells came to his ears.

He found a snug hiding-place behind three barrels, and there he crouched to await the dawn. And he was afraid of what the dawn might bring. The two policemen had seen his uniform, and he was the only American man-o'-war's man in Port Said.

It was an hour later when he sat up and peered over the three barrels. Some one was coming along the waterfront, some one who sang lustily. And the song interested Peter. It tore away for a moment the cloud of gloom that was upon him. The singer's chant shattered the silence. He caroled loudly:

A Yankee sailor-boy's the one
To start a blazing lot of fun—
To drink and fight, to make the night
Go merrily till morning sun
Pops up to show he's drunk as Chloe,
With head—

"Ahoy!" cried Peter, interrupting the song.

"Ahoy to you!" answered the singer.

Peter climbed out from behind his breastwork of barrels. The singer had halted. He was a short, fat man with a face that exuded good-fellowship, and Peter Sherman felt peculiarly elated as he approached him.

The fat man made a sudden spring forward. "Why, it's a Yankee jackie," he said. "Why, they've gone and left you behind on your little lonely own. Tell your Uncle Dudley how it happened."

"The Black Wind of Misfortune struck me," said Peter Sherman.

The fat man waddled over to one of the barrels and took a seat upon it, and then Peter Sherman Kennedy told him the story of the Arab palmist, the water-soaked watch and the Three Great Winds that govern the world.

The fat man was interested in the Three Winds. He had never heard of them before, and Peter Sherman patiently explained. The fat man breathed heavily.

"Well, I'm dashed," he said, as Peter ended his story. "That's an awful thing, an awful thing."

"It sure is," said Peter. "Here I've lost my boat, and the betting is ten to one that I'll be pinched to-morrow morning for hitting that fat Arab on the nose with my watch. What did he want to be sitting out there at that time of night for, I want to know?"

The fat man, who was evidently an optimistic pessimist and whose face contradicted his doleful remarks, shook his head and again repeated his refrain.

"It's an awful thing," he said, "—an awful thing."

He chanted the words so that they resembled a dirge. Peter Sherman was silent. His imagination pictured the *Paducah* steaming down to Suez while he sat upon the barrel.

Suddenly the fat man sat up and stared at Peter, his large, bulging eyes looking as if they were going to pop out of their sockets and do serious damage to anyone immediately within range.

"Say," he said, bringing his fat hand down upon Peter's knee, "we're beating it out in the morning."

"Where to?" asked Peter.

"Colombo," answered the fat man.

"The *Paducah's* going to Colombo," said Peter.

The fat man rolled off the barrel and stood upright. "Then come with me," he said. "I'll stow you away on the old *Euphrates*. I'm sorry for you. It's an awful thing, an awful thing."

THE *Euphrates* was a tramp steamer, and she carried only one passenger. That passenger was the owner, an aged Scotchman who, with a nurse, went

along to see, as the fat quartermaster explained, that the captain did not cheat him out of a cent in the matter of freights. There were three white officers, two white engineers and two white quartermasters. The rest of the crew was colored, and, according to the fat man's opinion, they were the greatest lot of scoundrels that you could gather between Marseilles and Mombasa. "An awful mob," he said, "—an awful mob."

Peter Sherman Kennedy climbed aboard the *Euphrates* and, under the guidance of the fat quartermaster, crawled into a boat on the after-deck. The quartermaster promised that he would provide him with food. The story of the Black Wind of Misfortune had upset the quartermaster, and Peter Sherman was afraid, as he climbed into his hiding-place, that the fat man would weep openly.

Two hours before dawn the *Euphrates* threw off her hawsers and started down the canal on the track that the *Paducah* had taken eight hours before. Peter Sherman Kennedy heaved a sigh of relief as he heard the throb of the old tramp's screw. He felt inclined to bless the fat man as he snuggled down in the bottom of the boat.

The *Euphrates* did not pull up at Suez. Peter Sherman, peering from beneath the canvas covering over the boat in which he lay, saw the lights of the old town as the *Euphrates*, now under increased speed, pounded by. The night was cool, and Peter propped up the canvas cover of the boat so that the breeze blowing from Jebel Attaka might cool him. He congratulated himself on the fact that Port Said was behind him and that he was moving in the same direction as the *Paducah*. With his face to the opening he calculated his chances on overhauling the cruiser at Colombo. The *Euphrates* was not an ocean flier, but he knew that the *Paducah* would not steam at full speed.

Peter Sherman's meditations were interrupted an hour or so after the *Euphrates* had passed Suez. A big moon swinging low over the horizon flooded the deserted deck with silver light, and out came a figure that made Peter Sherman emit a little gurgle of surprise.

The figure walked from the stairway to the rail and stood looking out across the Red Sea at a point not more than ten feet from Peter's observation-hole. The eyes of the gunner's mate scrutinized the figure carefully. He knew that he was not mistaken. It was impossible for him to be mistaken. The person leaning over the rail of the *Euphrates* was the girl whose palm was being surveyed by the Arab seer at the moment that Mr. Kennedy fell upon that unfortunate.

Peter Sherman, with eyes upon the girl, made deductions from the information which the fat quartermaster had given him. There was only one woman aboard the *Euphrates*, and that woman was the nurse of the aged Scotchman who was part owner of the vessel. Therefore it was plain to Peter that the girl leaning over the rail was the nurse the fat man had mentioned.

For an hour or more the girl stood alone upon the deserted deck, Peter watching her from his spy-hole. Then another person appeared. The newcomer was the red-haired second mate of the *Euphrates*, and it was plain to Peter that the girl leaning over the rail was the attraction.

As the mate bore down upon the brown-haired girl, Peter Sherman sensed at once that his presence was not pleasing to her. She gave a quick glance as he approached, and turned her back upon him. Peter Sherman was interested. The mate refused to take the rebuff and endeavored to start a conversation. The girl, her face turned away from him, answered in monosyllables. The mate persisted.

Peter, watching closely, was amused. The mate was persistent, but the girl preserved a cold front. She intimidated by words and actions that his company was not desirable.

The mate made an effort to force matters. He clutched the arm of the girl in the effort to turn her round so that he could see her face, and the manner in which his action was received surprised him. The girl flung his big hand from her arm, and her words came clearly. Peter was taking chances at that moment. He had thrust up the canvas covering and was watching closely.



The mate refused to take the rebuff and endeavored to start a conversation.

"How dare you!" cried the girl. "How dare you put your hand upon me! Go away at once! I am tired of your attempts to force your company on me."

Her words maddened the big sailor-man. "You little vixen!" he cried. Then, to Peter's amazement, he sprang forward and clutched the girl in his big arms.

Peter Sherman forgot the fact that he was a stowaway. In scrambling to his knees, his hand gripped the half of a tackle-block, and he tore away the lacing of the canvas which covered the boat. The red-haired mate's back was toward him as the girl struggled, and Peter, forgetful of everything, thrust his head and the upper part of his body out of the spy-hole.

The girl by a valiant effort tore herself away from the embrace of the mate and sprang back. Her action gave Peter Sherman the opportunity he wanted. As chief gunner's mate of the U. S. S. *Paducah*, his marksmanship was considered wonderful, and he upheld his reputation at that moment. As the big mate sprang again toward the girl, Peter flung the half of the tackle-block at his red head.

The aim was good. The missile struck the mate behind the ear, and he dropped as if he had been shot. The brown-haired girl gave a little surprised cry, stood for a moment staring at the mate as if wondering what had struck him, and then, without glancing up, rushed toward the stairway.

Peter Sherman Kennedy knew that an immediate change of hiding-place was necessary. He gripped the food-bag which the fat quartermaster had dropped in that morning, climbed out of the boat and slipped to the deck. The red-haired mate was recovering his senses; Peter Sherman moved with speed. Cautiously he ran forward, moving carefully along the moon-whitened deck. He took cover upon the approach of anyone and, by much cunning maneuvering, he reached the foredeck, climbed into a boat upon the starboard side and snuggled down to await happenings.

Hour after hour passed, and nothing happened. Peter reviewed the occurrence as he lay in hiding. His first fears fled from him. The mate would have no

evidence to make him think it was a stow-away who had flung the block. In all probability he would come to the conclusion that one of the crew, resenting his strenuous love-making tactics, had sneaked up behind him and committed the assault. Peter Sherman grinned as he thought how the red head of the second mate would ache in trying to think out which one of the rascalion mob had assaulted him.

"The Black Wind of Misfortune struck him that time," he said, and, feeling much pleased with himself, he fell asleep.

IT was after six bells on the following morning when Peter Sherman Kennedy got another surprise. The *Euphrates* was pounding down the Red Sea at a fourteen-knot gait, and Peter had lifted the canvas to catch the soft breezes from the Arabian Desert. Coming across the deck and making straight toward the boat in which he was hiding, was the brown-haired girl!

She carried a steamer-rug on her arm, and halting nearly beneath Peter's hiding-place she stood looking out at the sandy slopes of Hejaz in the far distance.

Suddenly, to the great astonishment of Peter Sherman, she spoke.

"Are you there, Mr. Gunner's Mate?" she called in the same soft voice that had questioned him as to the cause of his misfortunes at the Hotel Continental.

Peter did not answer. He could not answer. His brain was trying to puzzle out how she had discovered him.

"Mr. Gunner's Mate, are you there?" she asked again.

Peter moistened his dry lips and gasped out an answer. "I'm here," he said.

Peter thought that he heard a little amused laugh; then the girl spoke again. "I thought you were here," she said. "Now can you reach down and take this parcel from me? If you put your arm down, I can just manage to reach you. It is food. Wait a moment till I see if there is anybody about."

She gave a quick survey of the deck and watched the third officer on the bridge till he had his back turned; then

she lifted up a parcel which was concealed beneath the steamer-rug, and Peter's right hand clutched it.

Peter Sherman expected the girl to scurry away the moment she had made the transfer, but she remained standing near the rail looking out across the sunlit sea.

"How did you know I was here?" asked Peter after a pause.

"I watched you when you thought I had gone below," she answered quietly. "I wondered what had knocked him down, and I was curious. I saw you run along the deck and hurry forward."

"He was only stunned, wasn't he?" asked Peter.

"That's all," she answered.

"He'll search, wont he?"

"I hardly think so."

"Why?"

"Because — because something has happened, Mr. Gunner's Mate. Something has happened this morning."

"What is it?" asked Peter.

The girl paused for a moment as if debating with herself as to whether she would give the information to the stow-away; then she answered his question: "The captain is down with hemorrhagic smallpox!"

Peter Sherman gave a little whistle of astonishment. "Gee!" he cried. "Oh, gee! Say, what are they going to do?"

"What do you mean?" asked the girl.

"Aden?" questioned Peter.

"No, we're going on," she answered.

"You know we have one of the owners aboard,—the old man that I am nursing,—and he is anxious to get the boat to Colombo. I must go now, Mr. Gunner's Mate. Good-by!"

During that hot day Peter overheard scraps of conversation which confirmed the story that the girl had told. The captain of the *Euphrates* was down with black smallpox, and the news upset the ship. He heard the mixed crew of Arabs, Somalis and Hindus chattering of it as they went about their work. The third officer and the second engineer talked together as they stood for a moment near the boat in which Peter lay, and the gunner's mate of the *Paducah* heard enough to convince him that the captain was in a bad way.

In the late afternoon, the air of depression which was upon the steamer seemed to increase. The fat quartermaster came along the deck wearing a particularly mournful countenance, and Peter whistled softly.

"Glory be!" said the quartermaster as he discovered the spot from which the low whistle came. "I thought you had jumped overboard and swum to Suez. You'd be a darn sight better off there than on board this old craft."

"What's the latest?" asked Peter.

"The old man and the first officer are down now," said the quartermaster, "and there are three sickening for it in the fo'c'stle. Oh, this is an awful thing, an awful thing."

The third officer then signaled the quartermaster, and Peter was left to think over the news. And as the hours went by, he came to the conclusion that the Arab palmist at Port Said who had told him that the Black Wind of Misfortune was upon him had not been far wrong in his prophecy. It looked as if it was a mighty *strong* wind. He had missed the *Paducah*; he had been chased out of Port Said; and now he was a stowaway upon a pest-ship!

It was a long night for Peter Sherman, crouching in the boat. The atmosphere of gloom seemed to weigh upon him. The heat was oppressive, and he could not sleep. With chin on the gunwale of the boat in which he was hiding, he stared out across the moonlit waters and watched the little pin-points of light where lonely Arab villages appeared upon the shore line.

The fingers of the dawn thrust themselves out of the east, and Peter, with his head through the canvas, drank eagerly of the fresh breezes. The rim of the red sun showed above the horizon, and as Peter stared at it wondering what the day might bring forth, his ears caught the sound of pattering footsteps upon the deck. Hurriedly he crouched, pulling down the canvas covering. Then, as he waited, there came to his ears the voice of the brown-haired girl.

"You can come down now, Mr. Gunner's Mate," she said softly.

"Why?" asked Peter, lifting up the cloth and looking down at her.

"Because there is work to do," she answered.

"Work to do?" repeated Peter.

"Yes," she murmured, "—man's work, Mr. Gunner's Mate. It is no time for a United States man to be hiding."

Peter Sherman squinted at the bridge. The third officer was walking up and down, but a ventilator made it impossible for him to see the stowaway. Peter thrust his head and shoulders out of the boat and looked at the girl. She looked fair and sweet in the morning light. Her face was white, but the big brown eyes that looked up at him told him that it was not the pallor of fear. There was courage there, and there was no quaver in the voice.

Peter, in that quick survey, noted the piled masses of brown hair and the soft little tendrils that crept down over the white brow; he noted the full red lips and shapely little nose, and he told himself that the girl looked ten times fairer that morning than she did in the Hotel Continental at Port Said.

"What has happened?" he asked breathlessly.

"The second mate and the owner are down this morning," she said, her voice tense with emotion. "The third is the only officer aboard that has not been stricken."

Peter whistled softly. "Gee," he cried. "It has come aboard with a vengeance."

"You had better come down," she ordered.

Peter climbed out of the boat and dropped to the deck. He stood erect before her as if lined up for inspection, and the brown eyes scrutinized him keenly. And Peter, in spite of his two days in cramped quarters, was a sight that looked good to the girl. His navy training had made him keep himself spic and span, and the girl smiled as she glanced at the crease in his trousers which long habit had made Peter put in there in spite of all difficulties.

"What is your name, Mr. Gunner's Mate?" she asked.

"Peter Sherman Kennedy," answered Peter.

"Mine is Madeline Seward," she said, "and I'm from Boston. We're country-

men, Mr. Kennedy, and we must work together, although the Black Wind of Misfortune is upon us. It seems to have fallen on me as well as on you."

She smiled upon Peter as she had smiled that evening when he had hurled the palmist from the colonnade of the Continental; then, without another word, she turned and led the way toward the bridge. Peter followed her, his cap set rakishly on one side, the gold letters of the U. S. S. *Paducah* shining brightly in the morning sunshine.

The girl led Peter up the ladder to the bridge, and the gunner's mate had his first good look at the third mate of the *Euphrates*. He saw a slim Liverpool Englishman with a small pug nose and a freckled face. He had little squinting eyes that seemed to pounce upon Peter as the big navy man came toward him, and with a look intended to be ferocious, the Englishman spoke.

"Where the dickens did you come from, Mr. Stowaway?" he cried.

Peter Sherman Kennedy's lower jaw came against the upper with a snap. He took two paces toward the third mate, and the little Englishman found his eyes on a level with the bronzed chest of the navy man. Peter spoke in a voice that was little more than a whisper.

"My name is Kennedy," he said slowly, "Peter Sherman Kennedy, and I'm chief gunner's mate of the U. S. S. *Paducah*."

"But what are you doing here?" cried the third mate.

"I thought your old freighter was a bumboat, and I went to sleep in her," said Peter. "I just woke up."

Peter Sherman glanced at the girl. There was a glint of merriment in her brown eyes. In spite of the cloud of gloom which was upon the boat, she could not help smiling at the manner in which the undersized third officer of the *Euphrates* attempted to overawe the big navy man.

It was the girl who broke the little silence that followed Peter's answer. She turned to the third. "Mr. Martin," she explained, "Mr. Kennedy missed his ship at Port Said. I saw him there, and I knew that he was aboard the

Euphrates. Now that Mr. Holmes and Mr. Leonard are ill, I thought it was about time to make him show himself. We will want all the help we can get before we reach Colombo."

"Quite so, Miss Seward," said the third, immediately taking advantage of the avenue of escape which she had given him. "We'll want all the white help we can muster if things do not improve."

THAT night Captin Lennox died.

The fat quartermaster reported that the disease was spreading forward. The black and brown tribe made no effort to fight it. With the fatalism of the East, they took to their bunks the moment they thought that the scourge was upon them, and the fat quartermaster had tears in his eyes as he helped Peter Sherman to handle the sick and those who only imagined that they were sick.

"It's got a grip of 'em," he said. "They're scared stiff with it. It's an awful thing, an awful thing."

The girl looked at Peter Sherman as she met him on the foredeck. The face of the gunner's mate of the *Paducah* was set. He had discarded the navy jacket and cap, and he looked a person competent to handle trouble at that moment.

"All Sheol will break out here directly," he said softly. "I've seen a scare get into a mob like this before."

The girl nodded, and next moment they received confirmation of Peter's prophecy.

A yell came up from the lower deck, a yell followed by screams and curses, and Peter Sherman sprang toward it. He knew what had happened. The stoke-hole staff had become infected with the germ of terror and had mutinied.

It was a fight that made Peter Sherman

feel glad that he had stowed away upon the pest-ship. The second engineer received a blow from a slicing-bar as he tried to drive the colored swarm back to their work, and they streamed over him as they fought to dodge the blows of the gray-haired Scotch chief engineer, McAndrew, who damned them in Gaelic as he fought.

Peter Sherman and the two quartermasters joined in the fight. The mutinous crowd was driven back; the injured engineer was patched up; and Peter Sherman climbed up to the bridge to report to the third mate.

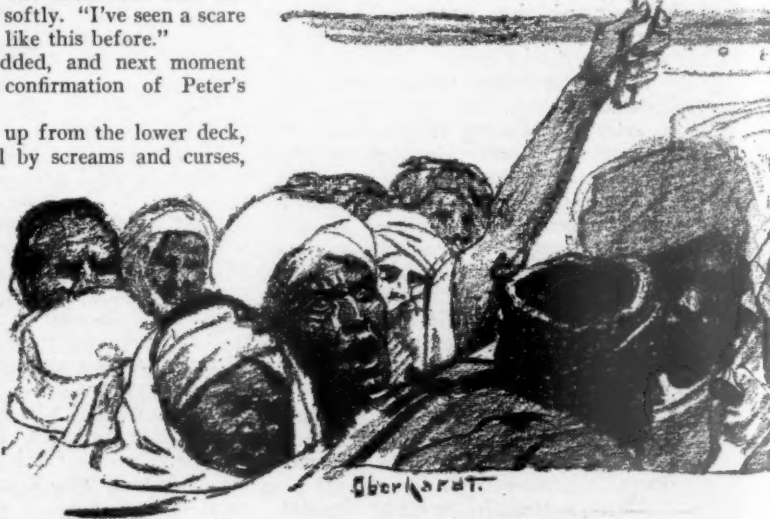
"It's a bad business," said Martin.

"A mighty bad business," said Peter Sherman.

"This crowd is crazy," said the third mate. "We'll have to watch them night and day or they'll get the upper hand."

It was a sleepless night for the white crew of the *Euphrates*. Terror had climbed aboard the tramp. Madeline Seward nursed her patients during the long, hot night.

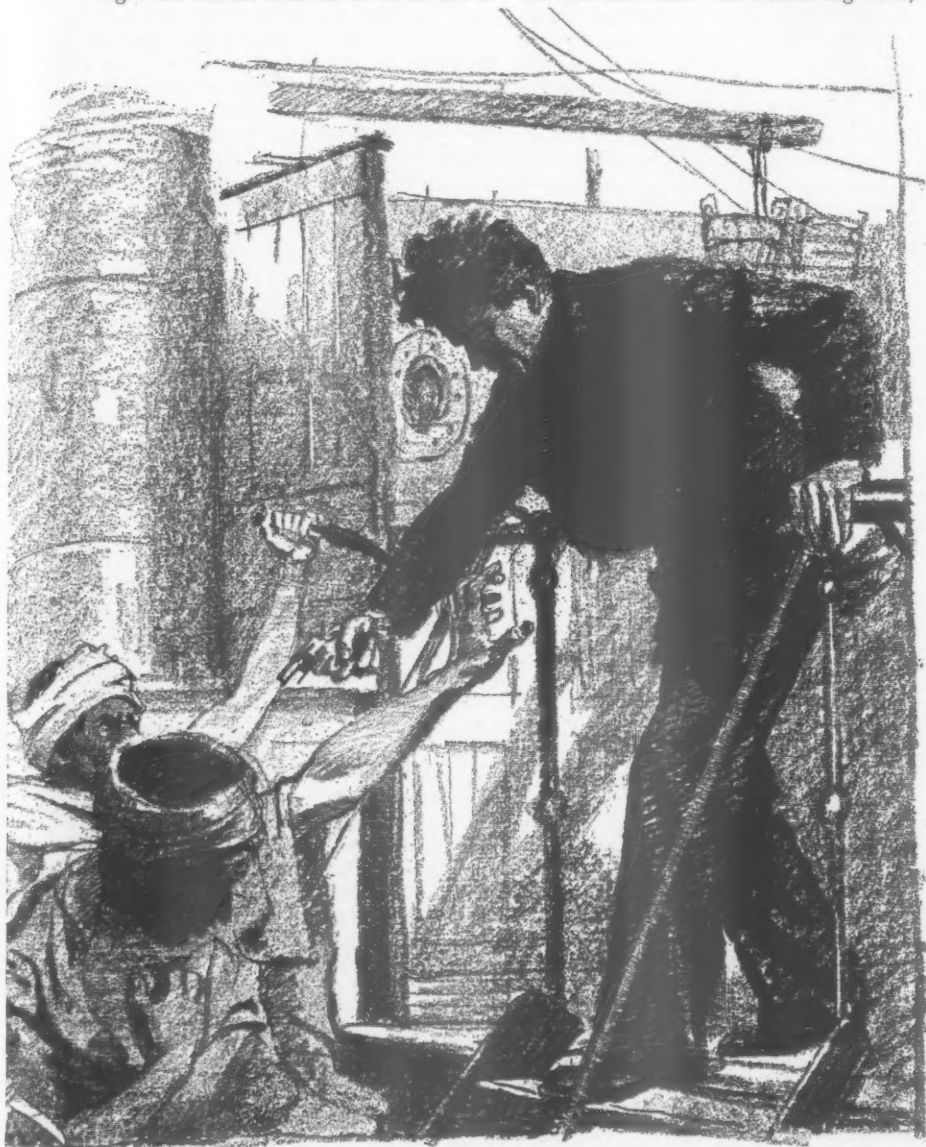
Peter Sherman Kennedy was the most active of the little band that tried to guard against trouble. Peter knew no fear. He invaded the pest-hold for'ard, and the fatalistic crew thought that the



They armed themselves with knives and crowbars and made a

wrath of Allah had descended upon them. He isolated the groaning patients, cleaned up their quarters, and by the force of his big fists tried to convince them that it was better to stand up and fight the disease than lie down before it.

During that night of suspense Peter discovered that the third officer of the *Euphrates* had lost what little nerve he possessed. Peter Sherman was not the only one who discovered that Martin was without backbone. The Scotch engineers,



rush at the ladder leading up to the bridge. Peter was at the head of the ladder.

the fat quartermaster and his little wrinkled mate apparently made the same discovery.

MORNING broke to find the *Euphrates* thrusting her bull-snouted nose through the oily waters. And Madeline Seward reported that the condition of the first and second mates and the old owner had not improved during the night.

Twice, that hot forenoon, the half-crazed natives had made an attempt to launch a boat, and twice Peter upset their plans. At least the Black Wind of Misfortune was giving him an opportunity to fight, and he fought with a will. And his navy-style method of dealing with the mutineers surprised them.

The girl's eyes showed appreciation whenever she met those of the gunner's mate; Peter's admiration for the girl's courage grew. He was proud of her, proud that she was his countrywoman. The little incident at the Hotel Continental seemed to make him feel that she and he were bonded together by the words of the Arab palmist. Once he stopped her as she ran along the deck, and there was a glint in his blue eyes as he spoke.

"The Black Wind is still going strong," he said, "but we'll beat it."

"We surely will, Mr. Gunner's Mate," she said.

And Peter ran on, feeling certain that one glance of approval from the brown eyes would give him sufficient courage to fight anything.

In the early afternoon a drink-crazed native suggested a rush upon the bridge where Martin, nervous and red-eyed, held guard. The drunken one found plenty of support. Two-thirds of the brown and black crew followed him, and their yells and curses went up into the hot air.

It was a battle that was worth seeing. Peter Sherman whooped as they charged. The rapidity with which the pestilence was spreading made them crazy men. They armed themselves with knives and crowbars and made a concerted rush at the ladder leading up to the bridge.

Peter was at the head of the ladder.

His revolver barked twice, and two of the ringleaders crumpled up on the hot deck. Another who flung a knife, which whizzed by the ear of the gunner's mate, received a bullet in the chest and fell praising Allah and all his works. The mob wavered for a moment, and then the two quartermasters attacked them in the rear as Peter dashed down the ladder. They broke and fled, leaving four of their number dead, while two others took many minutes to recover from blows which they had received from an iron bar wielded by the fat quartermaster.

"It's an awful thing," he muttered, as he wiped the perspiration from his face, "—an awful thing."

The stoke-hole gang rebelled the second time. One of their number took ill, and his removal gave them an opportunity. It was the fight of the day. The white engineers fought like madmen, and Peter Sherman Kennedy was a power in himself. The fat quartermaster and his little mate once again executed a flank movement. But the terrified stokers could not be driven back to their work. They broke and fled, leaving McAndrew, the gray-haired chief, stretched at the head of the fire-room ladder. It was impossible to hold them. Terror had come aboard the *Euphrates*, a stalking, gaunt terror that sapped their nerve. They were madmen. The Thing was clutching at them with invisible hands, the Thing which the wrath of Allah had sent upon them.

THE fires went out in the *Euphrates* toward evening. She drifted along, and the disease made good progress during the hours. Three times the fear-stricken crew made attempts to seize the boat; three times Peter Sherman beat them off. They were crazy men. The perils of the ocean were nothing to the horror from which they wanted to flee.

Peter spoke to Madeline Seward for a few moments during the late afternoon. There was no fear upon the face of the girl. The brown eyes still held the look of courage which Peter saw when she called him out of the boat.

"I guess this Black Wind of Misfortune has got to blow itself out some time," said Peter with a smile.

"Oh, it surely will," she said. "I know it will."

Peter, with his eye upon the fo'c'stle ladder, spoke again after a slight pause.

"That old faker at Port Said reckoned that either of the two other winds would put this one in the discard," he said, "—the Golden Wind of Luck or the Rose-pink Wind of Love."

"That is what he said," she murmured.

"Well, I hope one or the other will come along mighty quick," said Peter Sherman. "The sooner one or the other blows over this old hooker, the better."

He looked down into the brown eyes: A flush came to the face of the girl. The intense pallor of her face was colored by a wave of red which rushed across it, and she quickly turned her head away.

For a few moments there was silence between them; then the girl hurried away. Peter Sherman Kennedy watched her as she disappeared down the companionway leading to the saloon. The big gunner's mate was thinking that Madeline Seward was the one living person on that pest-ship, the one being to whom his thoughts went when he wrenched them for a moment from the business of fighting. The *Euphrates* rolled upon the sea, a dead ship.

Martin collapsed on the following morning. Peter Sherman felt that cowardice had a lot to do with the collapse of the third mate.

The little party of whites was practically in a state of siege as the morning advanced. A dozen times the crew attacked, and a dozen times they were driven back. Fortunately they had no ammunition, and the deadly marksmanship of the gunner's mate of the U. S. S. *Paducah* had put a wholesome fear into their hearts. If they had only possessed sufficient determination to charge in a body, they would have won the day, but their straggling charges enabled Peter to wing one or two of the leaders in a manner which sapped the courage of the laggard followers. It was a day of terror, a day in which the *Euphrates* echoed to the screams and yells of a fanatical crew who only wept, prayed and cursed.

It was the courage of the girl that surprised Peter Sherman. Wide-eyed from want of sleep, she bore up in spite of everything, attending to her patients with a care that made the big gunner's mate wonder as he looked at her slight form. He told himself that she was a pearl among women, a courageous girl who could face the punches of Destiny with a clear eye and a brave heart. On that little floating hell she seemed to grow so that she became to Peter a spiritual presence which stirred him to efforts that he would not have made under any other incentive.

When the fat quartermaster and his little wrinkled mate gave out, and when the two engineers fell asleep at their posts, Peter Sherman Kennedy, whose nerves were racked with a desire for rest, stood up and watched the cat-like devils who were awaiting an opportunity to rush the little band of whites and massacre them.

And it was Madeline Seward who stiffened his nerve and made him fight the devilish desire to sleep that was upon him. It was the girl who kept back the overwhelming feeling of defeat. And as Peter, his revolver gripped in his hand, watched the crew with blinking eyes, he knew that to him had come the Rose-pink Wind of Love of which the Arab had spoken. He loved Madeline Seward, loved her with a love that made him take risks that would have unnerved ninety-nine men out of a hundred, that made him think little of the disease and less of the fanatical crew that would commit any crime to escape the pest-ship.

It was love for her that sent him flying forward when that same crowd of terror-stricken fanatics set fire to the ship, and it was love that made him oblivious to the pain of the fire-scarred hands that beat out the flames. Under the influence of her brown eyes, he became a person capable of accomplishing any task, and he smiled up at her as he staggered back with blackened face and parched lips after he had trampled out the blaze which the maddened crew had started.

"We'll win," he gasped. "We'll win!"

And Madeline Seward put out her little hand and patted the big smoke-black-

ened hand of the gunner's mate—the hand in which a revolver was still gripped hard.

"Of course we will win," she murmured. "Of course we will win—Peter."

And Peter Sherman Kennedy, chief gunner's mate of the U. S. S. *Paducah*, at that moment felt a god. Up within him came a surge of strength which made him feel certain that he could have driven the mixed crew single-handed into the Indian Ocean.

It was the girl who first saw the smear of smoke upon the horizon, the smear that grew larger and larger. The crew saw it. A silence fell upon the stricken ship. The smear grew larger; from it emerged the stone-colored smokestacks of a steamer; and Peter Sherman gave a great sigh of relief.

"It's a Peninsular and Oriental liner," he murmured, turning to the girl.

"We are saved," said Madeline.

Her little hand was resting on the rail as she spoke, and the big hand of Peter Sherman closed over her fingers.

"We're saved, comrade," he said quietly. "It was a narrow escape and—and only for you—only for you, we'd have gone under."

IT was two days later that the *Euphrates*, manned by two officers and half a dozen men lent by the S. S. *Maloja*, steamed in past the breakwater into the harbor of Colombo. The yellow flag was flying above the old freighter, but the vigorous measures adopted by the stern-jawed doctor who had volunteered from the *Maloja* had brought about good results. No fresh outbreaks had occurred, and the white patients were improving under treatment.

Peter Sherman and Madeline Seward were standing on the foredeck of the *Euphrates* as she steamed into the harbor, and as the old town came up before them out of the silver mists of a sunny day, Peter Sherman gave a cry of joy.

"Look!" he cried. "Look!"

Madeline Seward looked in the direction in which Peter pointed.

"What is it?" she cried excitedly.

"Quick, tell me!"

"It's the *Paducah*!" cried Peter, "—the darned old *Paducah*!"

"Oh, Peter," she cried joyfully. "Oh, Peter, you can join your ship the moment quarantine is lifted."

Peter Sherman turned and clutched the little hands of the girl.

"Why," he stammered, "I—I don't want to—"

He stopped and looked down into the brown eyes that looked up at him.

"Peter," she said softly, "it is your ship and your flag. You cannot desert it."

"But you?" he cried.

"Why, the moment Mr. Melrose is better, I'll take a boat back to Marseilles and then go home to Boston," she said. "I want to see my home town again. And, Peter—"

"Yes, yes," cried Peter.

"The *Paducah* will be back to the States in six months, and then—why, then, Peter—"

She looked up at Peter Sherman Kennedy, and Peter, his heart filled with a sudden rush of love, stooped down and took her in his arms. They were comrades who had been bound together by the Black Wind of Misfortune, which had been swept away by the Rose-pink Wind of Love.

It was ten days after the arrival of the *Euphrates* that the deck officer of the U. S. S. *Paducah* was startled by the appearance of a face at the head of the gangway.

"Come aboard, sir?" said Peter Sherman Kennedy.

"Kennedy!" cried the officer. "Why, what the devil struck you?"

"The Black Wind of Misfortune struck me," said Peter quietly.

"I think you have been drinking, Kennedy," the officer said, "but you had better tell that tale to the old man. He's in the right humor to listen to a yarn like that."

And Peter Sherman Kennedy, walking on air and dreaming of brown eyes that were filled with a courage that had made his own fears take flight, smiled as he moved away. Peter Sherman Kennedy believed that the wise man at Port Said was possessed of the wisdom of the world, and that the Rose-pink Wind of Love would carry him to the Harbor of Dreams.

The Man In the Gray Suit

*THE story of the detective who had been
shelved "for the good of the service."*

By Frederick R. Bechdolt

Author of "Jimmy Riley's Turn," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY GRANT T. REYNARD

WHEN Detective-Sergeant Brennan rang for the wagon, the mean street yielded a shabby crowd. But before the tinkling in the Gamewell box fairly died away, ennui had seized a goodly portion of the audience. They went back to the dirty buildings which had disgorged them. A meager half-circle of spectators remained; their faces were apathetic. To such connoisseurs of sordid tragedy, the incident brought small hope of stirring jaded sensibilities. The prisoner would neither fight nor weep.

A ragged man with furtive, pallid face and twitching hands, he was taking his plight as a matter of course. He stared down the street with drug-paled eyes, as if impatient for the coming of his jailors.

Detective-Sergeant Brennan never so much as looked at his charge. It was as if this sorry parcel of humanity were so lean and limp in its soiled and tattered wrappings, that the bearer felt justified in disclaiming any possession, and waited with chagrin until he could deliver the cheap thing to its proper owner.

Well barbered, big of body, neatly dressed, Brennan made a clean contrast not only to the prisoner but to all about him. His gaze went through the little fringe of watchers and past them, as if he did not see them. It rested on the dingy buildings across the street and became heavy with disgust.

The gong of the patrol wagon clanged two blocks away. Brennan turned his back on the prisoner and looked in the direction of the sound. His face lightened ever so little; he sighed as with relief.

The grim black auto came to a stop beside the curb; a red-faced man in blue and brass emerged from its cavernous interior.

"Petty larceny, Sam. Book him to me." Brennan's eyes met the wagon officer's, and he flushed.

The wagon-man grinned. "Petty larceny," he repeated; "and booked to Detective-Sergeant Brennan."

"Don't rub it in." Brennan's smooth face darkened and he turned abruptly away. Before the automobile had gone, he was thrusting aside the last few loiterers.

"Get on now!" he ordered gruffly. "Don't be blockin' the sidewalk. Get out o' this!" His thrusts were vicious. His voice was that of a man who has somehow been goaded to the point of petty exasperation.

The connoisseurs of sordid tragedy fell back before him; they melted away into open doors and by-streets. Brennan walked slowly down the sidewalk. Debonair of dress and huge of stature, he swaggered leisurely before the dingy buildings, past many entrances where suits of old clothes dangled in the breeze.

His frown grew deeper. "Petty lar-

ceny," he muttered. "Booked to me!" He swore.

His eyes went to the row of dirty stores, and filled with rage. In various doorways, dark-eyed men watched him pass. Failing to catch his somber attention, some ventured to hail him. To their good-mornings he made no reply.

At length his lips began to move again. "Nice detail! Oh yes! I got it handed to me right and proper."

This had been going on a month now. Prior to that time, Detective-Sergeant Brennan had pride in his work, the pride of an artist. He had held that best of billets—the identification bureau. He had studied the photographs of badly-wanted men; he had searched the city for faces to fit these pictures and descriptions. He had learned the ways of skilled crooks, and had become versed in the gossip of those who live by law-breaking. He had anticipated the movements of famous thieves; had arrested them as they alighted from trains. His prisoners had been worth while in those days; his task had been absorbing.

Then one morning, apropos of a meeting of the Police Commission, there had come a shake-up in the upper office. "For the good of the service," was the explanation in the orders of the captain. Brennan knew better. "For the good of politics," he growled. "Some one's got a drag."

He drew the second-hand-store detail, and now he explored a hundred ill-smelling establishments, badgered a hundred voluble proprietors on the subject of daily reports, and brought shambling petty-larcenists to trial in police court.

And he had learned to-day, what he had long suspected—that his successor had used ward politics as a lever to pry him from the identification detail.

To that successor his mind went now. "Jerry Flanagan," he brooded darkly. "Him and his stool-pigeons! Town full of guns and bein' tore wide open. And me chasing tool thieves! . . . Bah!" he commented, as he turned into a side street.

A few moments later a gust of wind blew off his hat.

The derby careened on its brim across the sidewalk and vanished under a bill-

board. Brennan plunged after it, kneeled on the pavement's inner edge and peered through the twelve-inch space between the bottom of the advertisement and the earth. The fugitive lay an arm's length away, entrapped between two brickbats.

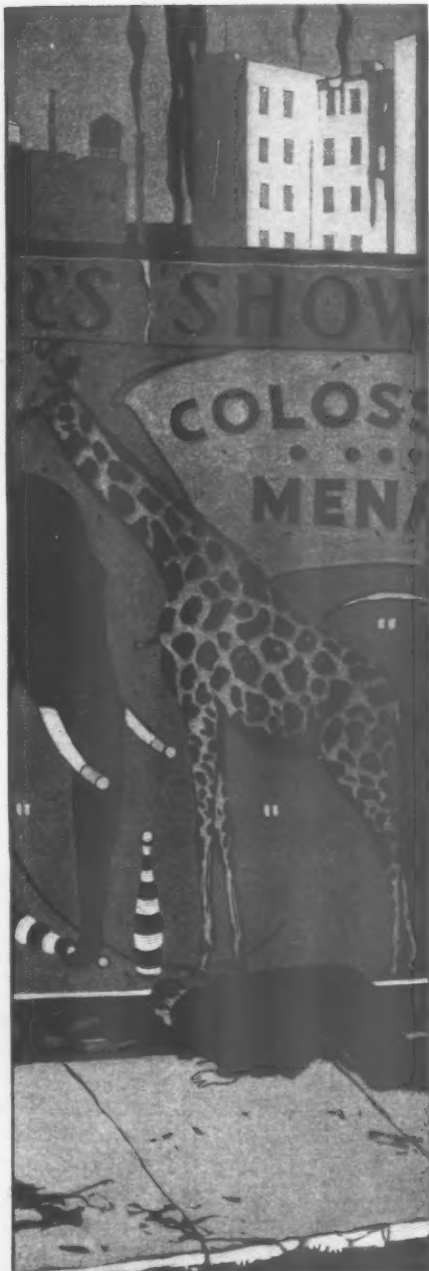
And now Detective-Sergeant Brennan's feelings underwent further outrage. He lowered his big bulk until he was lying prone; he thrust his arm through the twelve-inch aperture; he grasped the hat and started drawing it toward him.

Then he stopped. For nearly a minute he lay motionless, his legs and body on the dusty sidewalk, his head within the hidden space behind the billboard. He was looking across a half-block of vacant lots which had been desolated by the great fire, a region of brick piles and debris ten feet below the sidewalk level. On three sides, this area was bounded by bill-boards, and on the fourth it was fenced off from the alley by a ragged wall, the remnant of a factory.

A tall, slim man, in a neat suit of gray material, was emerging from a space beneath the sidewalk, straight across the block from Brennan. He turned his head as if to glance about him, then walked quickly to the ruined wall. He passed through a gap and vanished in the alleyway.

Holding his captured derby in one hand, Brennan wriggled back to the sidewalk. "Humph!" he muttered, and seemed on the point of setting forth for the alley. Then he shrugged his shoulders. "Oh well, second-hand stores are my detail. No business of mine who he is or what he's doing there."

The memory of his particular task in guarding the city's peace, made Brennan frown again. He brushed off his clothes and walked on slowly, ruminating over the news which he had heard that morning, the intrigue whereby Jerry Flanagan had managed to usurp the identification detail. He gained the next thoroughfare with a mind so filled with rancor toward his successor, that a Greek pawnbroker wept before his threats of arrest and bodily violence; and the next-door neighbor ground his teeth, shaking a trembling fist behind the broad back of his official visitor. Bren-



He lowered his big bulk until he was lying prone; he thrust his arm through the twelve-inch aperture; he grasped the hat and started drawing it toward him.

nan swaggered through the various musty establishments with about as much consideration for feelings as a goaded bull in an arena.

At noon he encountered further food for anger in the Hall of Justice. He was entering the great gray building when he saw Detective-Sergeant Flanagan coming down the steps.

"Morning, Brennan." Flanagan waved his hand.

Complacency was written on his florid face; his smile was full of condescension. There was about him, in his gesture of greeting, in his very stride, a sureness bordering on arrogance. Brennan nodded curtly and a thin red mist swam before his eyes.

"What's happened now?" he pondered when he was able to think with some calmness. "He's put something over."

A noon edition of an evening paper answered his query. It lay on the wide table in the upper office; and its front page proclaimed in large red letters that Detective-Sergeant Flanagan was cleaning up the town. The story went on to recount the progress being made by the Identification Bureau. It closed with a list of criminals who had been snared the night before. Brennan recognized every name—the prisoners were ex-convicts, decrepit from serving long sentences, their vitality and skill long since corroded by drink and opium. He laughed unpleasantly.

"That bunch of rusty hop-heads," he told himself. "And the papers fall for it!"

He hurried to make out his reports. The upper office, with its noon-time bustle, had suddenly become distasteful to him. He shouldered his way through the groups of big-bodied, wise-faced men and went alone to luncheon.

He ate his meal in solitude and left the restaurant slowly. Gloom rode upon his shoulders now, an overwhelming burden. He had two cases in afternoon police court—a drunken vagrant who had tried to sell a pair of stolen shoes, and the drug victim he had arrested that morning. He was in no hurry to face either ordeal of humiliation.

He was walking up Montgomery

Street. On either side, great buildings loomed; their walls bespoke solidity, their massive architecture suggested invulnerable strength. They were banking houses. For habit had led Brennan's footsteps into the district which in former days he had guarded above all other parts of the city, watching its crowds for the faces of skilled thieves. He glanced at the stone buildings and his heart grew bitter, like the heart of an exile looking at the land from which he has been barred. Bad enough that he should be doing work which he loathed, but far worse, outraging all his sensibilities, was the ever-recurring thought of an incompetent handling the task which he had loved—and being praised for his very bungling.

He had gone for some distance at this slow pace, enduring the constant canker which was gnawing upon him, seeing but vaguely those who passed him. Suddenly he slackened his pace. He was now in the heart of the district, and he was looking across the street. A man was climbing the wide steps which led to the entrance of a banking house. He wore a neat-fitting suit of gray material.

Brennan recognized the figure which he had seen that morning in the vacant lots. The man mounted the flight. At its summit, just outside the door, he turned and faced the crowd. He began leisurely putting on his gloves. The detective halted.

IT was the slack end of the noon hour and the interior of the bank was quiet. Most of the officials and clerks were out at luncheon; the long row of windows which extended from entrance to rear was empty of faces, save only one. The paying-teller stood in his little cage, attending to a solitary depositor.

The voice of this customer and the intermittent clacking of an adding machine somewhere in the regions behind the cages, were the only sounds. The great room seemed to be enjoying a brief siesta between the morning rush and the hurried shower of gold which would begin when the business houses sent down their afternoon deposits.



The man in the gray suit began leisurely putting on his gloves. The detective halted.

In so far as external appearance could show, the customer was either a lumberman or a miner; his dress was rough, his manner crude. But he possessed a peculiar magnetism which showed in voice and eyes, and drew the paying-

teller's entire attention. He stood to one side of the window, and, facing him, the teller looked away from the street entrance.

While these two were discussing the purchase of a draft on Chicago, a wiry little man, whose dark clothes looked like those of a broker's clerk, but whose jaw was undershot and his eyes strangely restless, entered the lobby with no more noise than a cat. He slipped up to the cashier's office near the door, and in one lithe, silent movement, climbed over the waist-high barrier which shut off that compartment from the public.

The roughly-dressed depositor's voice was rising. "I don't just understand." He fixed his eyes on the paying-teller, who smiled good-naturedly as he answered:

"You tell me the amount of the draft and the bank you want to draw on, and I'll make it out for you, and then—"

"Well, do I have to pay you the money then?" the depositor demanded.

"You pay it to us and it goes to your credit with the Chicago bank." The paying-teller nodded.

He did not hear the stealthy footstep behind him. The door of his cage had opened noiselessly. The figure approaching him was moving like a swift shadow.

"But where is my receipt for what I have paid you?" The depositor shook his head dubiously.

A lean arm shot forward with a snake-like rapidity until the thin fingers had closed upon a packet of yellow-backed bills within a foot of the paying-teller's elbow.

"I know it's all right, but I don't like to pay money without getting something to show for it," the depositor said, frowning.

The wiry little form had glided from the paying-teller's cage. The thief was speeding soft-footedly toward the cashier's office.

"Why, you see—" The teller got no further.

The adding machine had stopped clacking. The clerk had glanced up in time to see that bent form running toward the front of the bank.

"Stop that man! Thief! Stop him!"

The clamor made the paying-teller whirl abruptly. He saw the open door of his cage and rushed through it.

The thief had vaulted over the cashier's railing. He reached the door and shot out like an arrow. As the foremost of his pursuers gained the entrance, they collided with the roughly dressed depositor, who seized one of them, demanding to know what was wrong. There was a brief scuffle, and the pair burst from the bank together. The clerk was trying to hold the depositor, who jerked away from him and followed his accomplice up the street.

FROM his post across the street, Detective-Sergeant Brennan saw the outburst through the doors of the bank. He plunged into the stream of traffic, dodged an automobile, ducked under the noses of two truck horses and circled a trolley car. He gained the opposite curb as the hue and cry was roaring up the avenue, half a block away.

Already a crowd had begun collecting before the scene of the robbery. Shouts were rising—questions, answers, outcries for the police. Faces flashed to and fro in aimless zigzag, pallid and twisted with excitement. Some one recognized Brennan and pointed to him.

"Here's a detective." At the announcement, a score of voices began giving directions. "Officer! This way! They ran up there. See them!" A score of fingers pointed up the block after the receding chase.

Brennan did not glance in that direction. Thrusting the more importunate informants to one side, he turned his back upon the hue and cry and started down the street.

As if pursuers and pursued did not exist, he ran on heedless of the uproar behind his back. He was looking straight ahead, straining his eyes, searching the stream of sidewalk traffic. He increased his pace, maintaining his search among those who walked before him.

Suddenly his tight face lightened and a grim eagerness shone in his eyes. A brief parting of the foot traffic had revealed a solitary figure. The man in the gray suit was nearly a block ahead of him.



The paying teller did not hear the stealthy footstep behind him. The door of his cage had opened noiselessly.

A uniformed policeman, running heavily toward the scene of the crime, saw the detective racing straight away from the fleeing thieves and called to him. Brennan plunged headlong toward him, missed collision by a hair, and neither saw nor heard him.

The man in the gray suit had disappeared again. The crowd had swallowed him.

Brennan gained the corner. He was puffing, breathless from his race. He stood there for a moment, and during that brief space of time his face wore a look of irresolution. Then he started on again. He was not running now; he was walking like a man who is behind time for an appointment. A few moments later he swung aboard an electric car, and rode to the mean street of

musty second-hand stores among which he had been laboring that morning.

The proprietors of the various dingy establishments, standing in their doorway, saw him swagger by; and, forgiving all that morning's injustice, sought anxiously to catch his eye, but he went past them unheeding.

The alley, lined on one side by the ruined walls, was deserted and when Brennan passed through the gap, there was no one in the vacant lots. Alone he walked among the brick piles. The tall billboards shut him from sight of anyone in the streets. He twisted and turned among the clinkered heaps until he reached the cavern-like aperture under the sidewalk and plunged into the black hole.

Darkness was complete here; it wrapped him, an impalpable mantle; he blinked, trying to peer through its folds. He strained his ears to catch some sound of life besides his own breathing. No sound came to him.

Gradually the darkness seemed to decrease from black to gray as his vision became accustomed to it. He looked about him, and he knew he was alone. In silence he tiptoed to a shadowed corner. He put his back to the grimy wall, shifted his feet until his position was comfortable, and became as rigid as a statue.

The place had been a part of a basement. Three walls enclosed it now; the sidewalk was its roof, and a pile of bricks blocked the most of the side which opened on the vacant lots. Facing the narrow entrance Brennan stood, invisible in his dark corner. Revolver in hand, he waited as motionless as an image of stone.

IN the office of the captain of detectives stood Detective-Sergeant Flanagan. Ineffable complacency shone on that heavy, florid face of his. Beside him two men, linked wrist to wrist by steel, shifted their feet, regarding the carpet with curiously cool apathy. One of them was roughly dressed like a miner or lumberman; the other was wiry and wore a dark suit of the sort affected by bank-clerks. Regarding them, Flanagan's manner was distinctly proprietary, like

the manner of a naturalist who exhibits some rare specimens to appreciative eyes.

"Now take a good look at them," he said, and shifted his gaze to two other men across the room. One of these was the paying-teller who had listened too eagerly during that noon hour. The other was the president of the looted bank. And now the paying-teller's face seemed to be losing several deep lines; he breathed deeply.

"That's the one who was talking of buying a draft." He pointed to the roughly-dressed depositor, who smiled enigmatically at the carpet.

"And that—" he met the sullen eyes of the wiry man in the dark suit, "—is the one I saw running away with the money." The thief's eyes resumed their scrutiny of the rug pattern.

Detective-Sergeant Flanagan nodded complacently, and he looked toward the captain of detectives, who had sat in silence watching the whole scene across his polished desk. The captain nodded.

"Well-known bank sneaks, both of them." Flanagan spoke with assurance now. The prisoners smiled satirically at the floor.

The captain of detectives arose and stepped to the door. The bank president and the confiding paying-teller followed him.

"That's all now, gentlemen," the captain said heavily. "If we need you again, we'll let you know."

The president of the bank bent his head until his lips came close to the captain's ear. "The bills," he whispered—"fifteen thousand dollars. Hasn't there been—?"

The captain's face was expressionless. "We're working on good information. We hope to have news for you within a day or two." He bowed them out and closed the door behind them.

He jerked his head curtly when they had gone. Detective-Sergeant Flanagan hastened to his side. The captain turned his back to the two prisoners that they might not see his frown.

"Bad enough," he whispered, "that a uniformed man should get them. The Central Station people will make a noise about that, too. It don't do the upper



Brennan strained his ears to catch some sound of life besides his own breathing. No sound came to him.

office any good, that sort of arrests. But what's worse, there isn't anything on them." His manner became almost fierce. "What kind of a case do you think we'll have, hey? Why weren't some of you dicks around to stumble onto them before they'd planted that money?"

The red face of Detective-Sergeant Flanagan darkened toward purple, and his eyes grew smaller as he answered:

"Dicks around? Listen! The patrolman on the block says he met Brennan within two hundred feet of them—and running straight away from them. And they'd just lammed out of the bank then. He could o' pinched them with the stuff right on them."

"Brennan!" The captain scowled. "Well, we'll sweat them. Take the little one first."

AT his dark corner under the sidewalk, stood Detective-Sergeant Brennan, rigid as a statue. The second hour was dragging toward its end. His muscles ached from inaction; his very soul fretted with a vast impatience.

Something moved among the brick-piles. A few small fragments rattled. Through the drumming which suddenly assailed his ears, Brennan heard an approaching footfall. He did not move.

A shadow darkened the narrow entrance; a form stood outlined against the light. It was leaning forward, as if ready to spring into the place or, at the slightest pretext, to leap back and vanish. Poised thus it remained a full half-minute. It straightened slowly and came on.

One step, then a second, and then a third. Brennan leaped upon his prisoner.

The chamber under the sidewalk resounded with the noises of their struggle, the thud of their bodies striking the earth, the snarl of oaths. Silence came abruptly, and into that silence, Brennan's voice.

"Move and I'll blow your head off."

There followed the click of handcuffs, the fumbling of a hand searching through clothing. A moment later Brennan emerged from the cave-like opening preceded by the man in the gray suit.

MEANWHILE, Detective-Sergeant Flanagan returned from the city prison to the office of the captain of detectives and faced his chief. Weariness showed in the faces of both men. Promises and threats, cross-questions and pleadings had sprung from their lips for more than two hours now, and to no end. The captain shook his head.

"Fifteen thousand dollars," he growled. "And they'll get the best lawyer in the city on the chance of keeping it."

Flanagan cleared his throat. "If Brennan—" he began. A knock on the door interrupted him.

"Come in," the captain ordered.

Detective-Sergeant Brennan entered with the man in the gray suit. The captain of detectives looked up and nodded

gloomily. He had always liked Brennan, but politics was more powerful than personalities, and now—he frowned again. "Well?" he demanded.

Brennan caught the inflection; he glanced at Jerry Flanagan and he smiled. The smile was not altogether pleasant. He made no answer to the captain's question but stepped to the polished desk and laid a bulky packet upon it.

The captain of detectives stared, and Flanagan uttered an oath. The bundle was made up of yellow-backed bills.

Brennan looked pleasantly at the man in the gray suit. "We talked it over coming up. He's going to confess."

The prisoner nodded, shrugging his lean shoulders. "He got me dead to rights. What's the use? I'll take a plea."

"And now,"—the captain of detectives smiled for the first time that afternoon, when Brennan had returned after escorting his charge to the city prison,— "how did you come to get *him*?"

Brennan regarded Jerry Flanagan. He had heard several bits of gossip from the captain's clerk during his absence from the room. His eyes were hard.

"I saw him go up the bank steps, and then start putting on his gloves. No one puts on his gloves going into a bank. So when the others come piling out, I knew this one would be outside stall—and"—his manner toward Flanagan assumed a tolerance now—"they would pass the money to him. I followed him and lost him; but I'd seen him this morning coming out from under a sidewalk; and I knew that would be the place where they'd all meet to make their cut." He looked more closely at Flanagan. "That's why I didn't trail the other two."

"Why aint you waiting there yet?" the captain of detectives demanded quietly.

Brennan's smile became pleasant. "Why, he had the money. He was sure to be the last to come. When I got him I knew the others weren't going to show."

The captain nodded. "The commission meets to-morrow night," he said slowly. "I guess you can stand second-hand stores until then."



In Society

ONE of Helen Van Campen's inimitable stories of Trippit and Dailey, bride and groom and headliners in big-time vaudeville.

By Helen Van Campen

Author of "The Dancing Carnival," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY COYLE CHRISTY TINCHER

SUSY, slip Miss Dailey them pickle beets an' the headcheese—it's home-made an' she used to love my beets," said the landlady. "What, refusin' even that teenchy bite, Goldie child? Listen, now, what's up?"

"I just aint hungry," said Goldie Dailey Trippit, glooming at her empty plate.

Susy the intelligent slavey urged her to try cottage pudding. Goldie bitterly declined, whereat the attention of Mrs. De Shine's first table of boarders, containing only selected vaudeville artists, became wholly Goldie's.

"Engines wont run without fuel, dearie," said Bessie Banana of the Bounding Bananas, King and Queen of the Flying Ring. "A nice steak would just fix you, an' Mis' De Shine aint the woman to deny it."

"Leave the child merely speak an' it'll be thrust at her," said the landlady, removing a sliver from a ringed thumb with the pin of her diamond sunburst. "I like to know why her appetite's went in this style—it aint natural. Goldie, why aint Johnny here for his meal as he oughta be?"

"Mr. Trippit's dinin' with his swell society friends, I presume," said Goldie,

and her curled head sank deeper. "He—he—"

"I'll have a session with that young guy," said Bill Banana privately, for Goldie had swiftly put her napkin before her face, and the movement of her shoulders was evidence of her grief.

"I thought I seen John takin' some folks out in the machine," observed Dan Dills the Tramp Comedian. "He's got the society bug."

"You tell'm how respectable married parties look at a wife bein' practically deserted, an' make it strong, or I'll go after him myself," commanded Bessie Banana, and Bill nodded gravely.

Mrs. De Shine poked her sunburst into the tablecloth temporarily, and rushed to Goldie. Susy brought a cup of strong black coffee fiercely ordered by Maizie Manning of The Marvelous Mannings. The landlady purred over Goldie, calling her a poor abused lamb. Voices from the far end of the table bade Goldie recollect that she was with her friends. Some one declared that Goldie would never be able to play her show that night; another wondered what the management of Storey's Fifty-ninth Street could do for a substitute for an act of the importance of Trippit and Dailey.

"I'll work! It simply came over me suddenly, an' I gave way," said Goldie from Mrs. De Shine's capacious red-satin bosom. "But imagine comin' smack on a twenty-four sheet right here on the corner of Thirty-eighth Street, announcin' 'Mrs. Amiel Spies Kip, the Forty-million-dollar Bride, in La Danse Indienne, assisted by John Trippit.'"

"La danse fiddlestick, the bold, forward minx," said Maizie Manning. "These society recruits will have to be put down. She probably can't even point her toe."

"Well, neglect is grounds any jury'll give heed to, dollin'," said the landlady ominously. "Don't be a simp an' leave him git away with such doin's, which he reminds me in a harrowin' way of William De Shine—good-hearted enough, yes; but entirely self, although he performed lovely on the 'cello. Poor lamb!"

Goldie patted one of her protector's fat cheeks, and the latter touched Goldie's melancholy big blue eyes with a slightly frayed lace handkerchief. Goldie had been allotted the second floor front, with the alcove, ever since her premiere in New York, when she danced in the chorus of the Dime Musee for three dollars a week and had to buy her own slippers. The landlady had gone with her to managers who, before that notable team, The Posing De Shines, retired, had often booked them. She knew Goldie's mother and father, who also were professionals.

"Whyn't he horn me in at just one of those parties? I only want to look at 'em," sobbed Goldie suddenly, and every lady present muttered that it was a shame.

"Stick among your pals, Goldie," advised Bill Banana, deeply affected.

"I got as much right as him to see



"Say, quit knockin' society forever, wont you, presh?" he begged.

what they're like," said Goldie darkly.

"Don't never expect to locate a masculine with any justice in him, dollin'," said Mrs. De Shine sadly. "De Shine taught me. They cater to themselves, an' us gells kin lump it."

"It seems like wherever a person looks, they see sufferin'," said Maizie. "Jim was sayin' a minute ago that Sammy Sanger wont come to dinner. He's sittin' up in the rehearsal room, nearly insane because Addie got mad an' went on a motor trip with her sister, while they were to open in the Lalor cabaret this very night. And he can't get a partner for his sort of dances, for it's all original stuff an' he does a lot of *ad lib.* comedy, too. What a world!"

"Sam Sanger? I worked with him two years, when he had the Sassy Sunbeams out," said Goldie, rousing. "He featured me. An' they fell out? I'm goin' up an' speak to Sammy."

She left hastily, and Mrs. De Shine beamed at Maizie, exclaiming, "She'll be workin' with Sammy, next!"

II

GOLDIE hummed, squinting at the eyelid she was bluing before the mirror of number one dressing-room at Storey's. Johnny Trippit sat beside her. He was worriedly rouging a large ear. She had come late, and been quite silent since her entrance, which was disturbing. She had on her white satin knickerbockers and hussar jacket edged with black fur before he experimented by saying:

"Gee, you must be stuck on that tune, hon. Did you know you was singin' 'Roses an' Love,' when there's no professional copies out yet? It's a restricted number."

"Restricted to who?" asked Goldie, and she put words to the song while fluffing her yellow hair. "Sam Sanger wrote it, an' he's a silent partner in Howe an' Hamlin's publishin' house. He wont let 'em restrict his stuff."

"Well, this'll be kep' for me an' Mis' Kip," said Johnny hotly. "That little sawed-off wont tell me that!"

"He's as good as your society friends," said Goldie.

"Say, quit knockin' society forever, wont you, presh?" he begged. "Can I

ignore the fact that the inner circle took me up, an' if you seen how grateful those people are to me for a new step, you'd savvy the influence I'll have soon as I know a few more. I'll be ast to country places for week ends, an' to yachtin' trips, an' it sure is one liberal education to mix with parties who got the real breedin'; also you'll find darn few vaudeville guys who'd git by with it—an' while I'm gittin' a firm grip on drawin'-room dancin', you git sore."

"Would you like me bein' in society the entire time, an' you left alone?" asked Goldie as they went toward the stage.

Johnny only stared at the Four Fanchettis, who held the stage, balancing themselves on wabbling ladders, and yelling "hoop-law" as they slanted toward the footlights. Stout Papa Fanchetti winked at Goldie as he bowed with his troupe, then sweatily heaved beside her in the entrance, until he had to rush out, when all his agile family ran up their ladders, leaping for each other and changing places without the ladders falling.

"I'll ascend where I wont mingle with vulgar folks like them dagoes," said Johnny while the Fanchettis hoop-lawed madly, the whole troupe swarming up the ladder where Papa Fanchetti was poised.

"They're dear, sweet people and I'd sit alone in the boardin' house if they didn't take me out nights," said Goldie. "Listen here, John: I note you never figger on your poor wife ascendin' too, an' society'll crab our home yet. It's nearly busted now, but keep on—an' blame yourself, later. Don't blame me!"

"Didn't you say once you rather be dead'n mix with any of 'em?"

"An' you knew I was merely peeved!"

Johnny made a sound denoting irritation, and Goldie found Maizie Manning next her. The Marvelous Mannings opened the show, and as they were a dancing act, Johnny snubbed them on principle, while Goldie, touched by the honest admiration of these young persons from the small-time, was very kind to Maizie.

"I waited to watch you again," said little Maizie. "Oh, mercy, Goldie, aren't

your diamonds grand? Say, you 'member me tellin' how because we didn't stake that stage manager at the Bergland in Milwaukee, he had the stage scrubbed fresh before every show, an' we like to broke our legs? He's got a brother here, an' so that's why our dressin'-room aint been cleaned; an' they wouldn't let Jim's pa back. But we can't hand a bunch of lazy grips our last cent—would you?"

"Perquisites are comin' to 'em," said Johnny coldly. "I give five all 'round."

"We wasn't always able to do it," said Goldie.

"I guess I could get service, myself, if I was broke," said Johnny. "But I'll soon be leavin' voddaville for a more refined sphere. It's got common."

Goldie trembled. What was he going to do? She could dance as cleverly as he; the managers all agreed on that. She said desperately:

"But dearie, I—they'd like my work if they saw it! I feel I could make good in society, when I was given first prize at the Vaudevillians Club ball last season, as most refined lady an' costume, an' as for genteel dancin', I've led grand marches ever since I was *Little Nugget*, an' danced all through Texas!"

"Preshe, they don't even have any grand march in society," said he and completed the havoc of her mind. No grand march? She looked piteously at Maizie as the drop rose for Trippit and Dailey, and they entered, singing. Johnny had to carry the opening number, and she spiritlessly danced their acrobatic buck.

He was going out of vaudeville, to those exclusive persons who were so refined that he dared not take his wife along? He was mysteriously evasive when she asked what they were really like, and now she understood his reticence. The gap between society and herself was too wide a jump for her to make. No grand march—and she had always supposed this impressive spectacle an essential formality!

She visioned Johnny as the pampered artist of great ballrooms—the papers said that of the Kips was a wonderful place. Mrs. Kip was called the forty-million-dollar bride. Why couldn't she

stay with her own set, instead of doing a few weeks in vaudeville for the Red Cross, and breaking up the headline act of Trippit and Dailey?

Goldie was miserably jealous; the sympathy of Mrs. De Shine and the boarders had been a knife-wound. Was he won from her, when he still fondly called her his baby doll and his kiddo?

"Hey, d'you want me standin' here on my bean all night?" Johnny gurgled, for, engrossed in unhappy meditation, she was dancing on her hands in the acrobatic buck, and had come face to face with Johnny, also on his hands, when she should have done a row of flips at the back of the stage.

Instantly she reversed herself, and gave the leader a smile as she cartwheeled past, hoping he wouldn't think it was grief that ailed her. The profession was saying enough about Johnny's behavior. When they were bowing, after much applause, Johnny smiled at her, and in a passion of renewed confidence, she smiled too. She was his kiddo, surely.

THEY were removing make-up in the hot dressing-room when she said:

"Lovey, I'm no fool. I can hep myself to that society stuff, an' you better take me with you to that Kip thing. Not that I care, but you know how people in the business gossip, an' you leavin' me so much—see?"

"We're pullin' down twelve hundred iron men a week, aint we?"

She was quiet while he flattened his red hair with brilliantine, then fastened the sparkling jeweled buttons of his evening waistcoat. Goldie's eyes were dangerous.

"Oh, it's no use—no use tryin'," she exclaimed. "All right! Keep your old society—I wouldn't go 'f I was begged! An' I wouldn't—"

"But kiddo—"

"Goo'-by!" said Goldie, stopping a tear with her powder puff as she motioned a tragic dismissal.

"Girlie, when I'm secure in my footin', then I'll take you!"

"I scorn them," said Goldie with a sob. "Either now or else never—get that? An' when gaddin' around the

drawin'-rooms an' Looey Cawnze Kip ballroom that's always bein' written up, think that if anything you don't like happens professionally, you're to *blame*."

"Whadda you crackin' at?"

"Come in, Maizie; Mr. Trippit's just leavin' to meet his refined friends," called Goldie, and Maizie Manning, shaking her dark head disapprovingly at Johnny, sat on her foot on his theater trunk. Johnny scowled and departed, but he heard Goldie say:

"He's like one of the family with those people—aint that *maddenin'*, Maizie?"

Johnny sighed. He had not told Goldie of his adventures socially, but

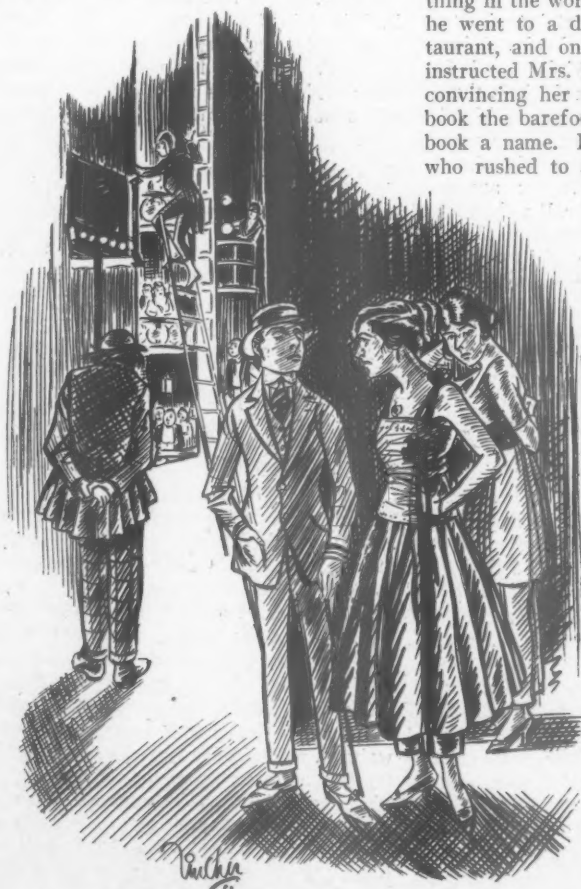
he had bragged of them at the Vaudevillians Club, whence Jim Manning had probably brought reports to Maizie. He had not kept entirely to facts when talking, so he might have made the club members believe that he was received as an equal. He hoped to be soon; Mrs. Kip buoyed him with her chatter about her set. And the man who was her dancing partner was surely agreeably situated for advancement.

It was at the restaurant dance, where he had been hired to entertain a private gathering, that she had seen him. She performed barefoot dances, and she wished to go on the stage, not for the money to be made, but to be doing something in the world, she explained. Later he went to a dancing-room in the restaurant, and on five mornings a week instructed Mrs. Kip in stagecraft, gently convincing her that managers wouldn't book the barefoot stuff, but they would book a name. He rushed to his agent, who rushed to a manager always alert

for novelties. The forty-million-dollar bride was booked for a week, and her acquaintances came to the rehearsals, and Johnny was hired for another dance or two.

He lost all his wit and easy humor when under the eyes of the great, and the pay received, for a young man capable of earning thousands each month, was inadequate, but he was almost "in," and the thrill of it stayed with him. He felt that he would make a place in society, as he had on the big-time, and he listened to the bits of talk between dances and yearned, as he never had for anything else, to be of the elect.

He suffered severely when, after much



"I'll soon be leavin' voddaville for a more refined sphere."

reflection, he went to a night rehearsal in a suit of rich black satin brocade, made with a one-button dinner jacket effect. The tailor had said all the smart men had them, and at the Vaudevillians notes were hurriedly made of the new mode. Confidently he greeted Mrs. Kip, who stared, smiled a very little, and said he mustn't feel badly, but that was a lounge suit, worn only in the intimacy of the home, and not evening dress at all! She was the kindest lady in these matters. Suppose he had gone in before all that crowd, instead of fleeing to the *Maison De Shine* to change!

There were countless perils to be surmounted, and gradually to endear himself to the Kips and their sort was imperative. It would be fatal to be too garrulous—he must go slowly. There was the trouble about Goldie—all females talked. No one could halt them. She might mention her mamma, Mamie Dailey, queen of burlesque these many years, and owner of three big shows. Goldie wouldn't be still for anyone. Some day, when he could call a chap like Kip by his Christian name, he could see about raising Goldie to his own eminence. But not now.

AT eleven o'clock, Johnny strolled into the lobby of the Lalor, pausing before a satin cord that was a barrier to the grill-room, where tables must be reserved. As Johnny looked, a small man, whose head rose to a bald peak, uprose from a table and beckoned, while the large and juttingly bony woman with him smiled. The Amiel Spies Kips! Delightful chance—he had not expected it.

"Well, Trippit old boy," said little Kip. "Sit down. Cream ale or Scotch high? They say it's a perfly good show here, though the other cabarets are terribly bad. Cig, Gracia?"

"Uh huh." Mrs. Kip smoked under a napkin's shelter, observing, "It's the new dancers I came to see."

Johnny basked in their intellectual presence. They had odd tastes. With forty millions, he would have been ashamed not to order vintage champagnes, but the Kips had large mugs of ale. Mrs. Kip was tall and large-featured, her hair dyed Titian, that popular

heroine shade. She wore a gown of emerald-green crêpe and some modest pearl ornaments. The booking agent had warned her to wear all the Kip jewels on the stage, although she coldly remarked that talent ought to be enough. She took this matter of dancing very seriously.

Johnny was glad of the crowd. All these persons would see him with the Kips. He listened slavishly to Mrs. Kip as the orchestra sounded tympani and drums to drown the clamor of the throng. Then the music stopped, and at its sudden pause, the noise stopped too. The sweet notes of a flute made Johnny cry:

"Why, what's that tune? Do you hear it, Mis' Kip?"

A light voice sang with the flute that summer's the time for roses, roses and love; and summer's the time for kisses, with moonlight above! Then two-voices:

Roses for you, kisses for mm-ee,
Only a pale old moo-hoon to see!

A spotlight whitened the musicians' gallery, illumining Goldie Dailey, beautiful, youthful, sending arch glances to the audience, and to sprightly Sammy Sanger, who posed in evening dress on the platform in the center of the grill.

Mrs. Kip snatched an announcement card proffered by the waiter, and Johnny read that Dailey and Sanger, world-famous dancers, were specially engaged.

"But it's my song—I'd never learn another in time, and she sha'n't have it!" said Mrs. Kip throatily.

"Song was restricted," said Johnny, and he stood, glaring. Spectators back of him protested. Goldie had descended to the platform after the first applause, and she swirled toward Sammy on her toes, and on his toes he met her; to a swinging, clashing czardas they gave a half Slavic, half Sammy-Sangerian dance, from the old Sunbeams act. Shouts and bravos demanded more, and they waltzed, with a grace lacked by mutilated tangoes and fox trots, to the delicately sensuous melody of "Roses and Love." Trying to get the audience to humming it, were they? The whole thing was a plot! What had she said—he could blame himself?

"It's a plot," he panted. "Howe an' Hamlin swore it was restricted to me, for you, Mis' Kip—an' her refusin' cabaret offers, sayin' they lower the artistic standard, an' then she doubles with *that* guy—the little bouncer, when I get my mitts on him, he better—eh?"

"My goodness, if you know the girl, we can buy her off—we must, or the opening will be positively killed! Do you know her well? Your *wife*—goodness, then it's easy—just say she must stop, as we can't have it."

"She wont—she's soft an' dimply an' blonde, but she's mad for fair now, an' then she's iron. It was—uh—it was me dancin' for society parties did it, but she's deeper'n I thought, to slip me this wallop—her an' Sanger!"

Johnny clenched his hands as Mrs. Kip said:

"She's truly charming. But why did she mind the dancing?"

"'Cause I didn't introduce her into society," said Johnny, blushing.

"I see! Look here, if I asked her, to my house—you've never been there, you can tell her—to a supper, to-night—how would it do?"

"I b'lieve I could square it—she's a swell kid, when you know her!"

III

SAMMY SANGER and Goldie sat together in the automobile Johnny had summoned. Maizie Manning, chattering excitedly, was beside Johnny—not that he wanted her, or Sammy, but Goldie had declined to go without the two whom she had invited to supper previously. Being real artists, Sammy and Johnny boasted of their salaries, of what they said to agents who dared offer a cut, both talking at the less-favored small-time Maizie, for Goldie was obviously not listening.

"That there hat with the bird of paradise the kiddo's wearin' set me back two hundred bucks, but in our position you gotta look smart," said Johnny, and Maizie sighed:

"Oh, simply grand! It suits her, too."

Goldie suddenly asked in a whisper:

"Do you s'pose they still use the high hand-shake?"

"All I know is, butlers holler your name from the hall," returned Maizie.

Goldie resumed meditation. She was close to the portal of that strange world, society. What did they within it? Johnny, recipient of the big-time's greatest honors, was ready to renounce them all, for society. She would be worthy of him. None of them had a finer bird of paradise. There was no finer bird. She hoped Sammy and Maizie would not be overwhelmed, and spoil the night, and she exulted that she was in her king's-blue cotton velvet brocade gown with the new six-yard-wide skirt. Her stockings and suede slippers were of pale gold, and she had on her diamonds, as always, for in vaudeville, jewelry is only left off when the press-agents report a startling robbery.

The car stopped in East Fifty-seventh Street. Goldie was panting—what did one say to butlers? She reached for Johnny, but he was going up the steps, at the top of which stood a small bald man, whose head ended in a peak. The butler!

"You may inform your mistress that Miss Dailey has come!" she said, and was confused when she heard he was Amiel Spies Kip, and that he considered it was bully of her to join them. He said they wouldn't use the drawing-room—it was too big, while the little sitting-room was really comfy. Then he yelled to an unseen Celeste, who did not answer. Goldie was disappointed. Where was the butler? Kip laid their wraps over a banister, with another yell directed to the upper regions.

"Why, there's no statuary or nothin' in their hall," whispered Maizie as Kip opened a door, and they followed him into a room where Mrs. Kip, in a plain black satin gown and lacking any of her jewels, put out a hand at the ordinary level, and with a beaming smile, cried welcome. No ropes of pearls, no tiaras ravished from the stores of Indian princes; and a tunic gown, when they were nearly passé! And the room had leather chairs, and polished oak tables, a piano, and a vase with six red carnations—why not orchids for people with forty millions? The rich supposedly possessed music-rooms for their pianos,

and conservatories for their flowers. Goldie started when Mrs. Kip said:

"I'm to cook supper, and Amiel's general minion on these nights. We keep the servants out because they snoop so. Tell Harkins to set the tray with the sweets outside the door, Amiel, and then he may go to bed. I hate keeping them up."

Mrs. Kip put on a large checked apron, and began operations upon a chafing dish under which lights were flickering. She was cooking eggs with tomatoes, and frying potatoes, and Goldie in bewilderment sat on the edge of a chair, staring. Maisie assumed a similar position, while Johnny, obviously puzzled, stood by the piano. Kip ran about, distributing knives and forks on chair-arms, and taking in trays holding coffee and cocktail materials. Through a chink in the door he bade a silent Harkins retire. Mrs. Kip then recalled Harkins, still invisible, and asked him to tell the chauffeur to stay up.

"It disgusts the chef when we cook, and we swear Harkins and the second cook to secrecy," said Mrs. Kip, stirring. "Don't you love domestic things, Miss Dailey? All we women do, of course."

"My art takes my whole time," said Goldie. Johnny edged closer to Maizie, who stealthily demanded:

"How 'bout their Looey Cawnze dinin'-room for eighty, that you told Jim about?"

"It's gotta be here somewhere," said Johnny. Maizie frowned. Sammy was the only comfortable guest. He aided Mrs. Kip with the meal, remarking:

"Say, you folks likin' bein' Bohemian, you oughta been with me when I was with Doty's Big Shows! I drewed ten a week for playin' cornet an' dancin' in black-face, an' we all rode from jump to jump in the wagons, an' we never did git a fillin' bunch of eats less'n somebody hocked sumpin'. That was the life!"

"Oh, lovely—where did you go? We want to do something like that—Gypsy caravan, without any servants pestering, and carry no trunks—wouldn't that be jolly, Miss Dailey?"

Goldie looked so strangely at her hostess that Johnny said hastily:

"Mis' Kip's only kiddin', presh."

"But I'm not," said the lady. "We'd both love it. I want Amiel to give up this great expensive house, and take a studio apartment where we can cook all the time."

"You ought to eat some of my wheat cakes," boasted Kip as he began to cut bread.

"Say, spin 'em that yarn about drivin' acrost Kansas in a buggy with your old man sellin' Sagwa Indian medicine an' you dancin' to drum trade, Goldie," urged Sammy.

"Mr. Sanger, if you're goin' to rake up pasts, others 's got plenty on you," said Johnny angrily, and both the Kips snickered as Sammy winked at them.

Maizie was shocked, and Goldie quivered. *This* society—when at the Maison De Shine there was no one ill-bred enough to allude to another's vicissitudes before reaching the big-time? Kip poured Scotch and soda, and she waved the odious mixture away. She didn't desire champagne, for she never drank it, but they might offer it, anyway.

"You see now what bringin' that low-brow done, presh?" whispered Johnny, and Goldie sadly nodded. Sammy was showing Kip how to manipulate a cigarette so that smoke seemed to come from the smoker's ear, and Kip was trying to learn the trick.

"Dear Miss Dailey, some more potatoes?" asked Mrs. Kip, advancing with her apron bunched in one hand. "When we're finished I'm going to beg you to talk to me—that delicious Mr. Sanger is doing it all."

"Well, every word he utters is just one harder knock at himself," said Goldie.

"He always was a pitiful hick," said Maizie, spurning Sammy.

Mrs. Kip wondered. What was the matter with the girl? Here she had set a scene in a homey manner, so that they would not be embarrassed. Couldn't Goldie feel that everything was friendly?

"Mr. Sanger's merely making fun, my dear," she said, smiling. "And—excuse me, that's some one at the door. Yes, Barnes—what is it? All right, I'll go right up."

Goldie whispered as Mrs. Kip went out:

"Just note that she's called to Celeste

an' Barnes an' Harkins, an' spoke of the chef an' second cook. Bah! they get this grub sent over from some dairy lunch, an' the entire thing is staged to impress us, an' staged like a Third Avenue film, at that! Aint it sinister that no servant really appeared at all? It's a bluff!"

"Say, Goldie, I was just remarkin' that we'll sing 'em 'Roses an' Love,' eh?" said Sammy, and Kip exclaimed:

"Oh, great—you must, Miss Dailey. Jove, you were bully in the cabaret."

stunned. He had looked upon Mrs. Kip as a goddess, remote from the sort of women he had met. And the way she encouraged Sammy, seeming to enjoy his grossness, and laughing at his comedy, had hurt and amazed Johnny.

Why didn't the Kips show their tapestried salon, the Louis Quinze dining-room, and all the household gauds that he had yearned actually to see and brag of to the club? And why didn't she wear her beautiful jewels—the idea of letting that little small-time Maizie see her with



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"They got the piano copy here," said Sammy, finding one.

"I *wont* sing, an' I'm goin' home, an' so's Maizie," said Goldie, rising regally. "Also Mr. Sanger better not dictate to me. I do my own managin'. Come, Maizie. Kin'ly summon dear Harkins or Celeste, as we wish our coats, Mr. Kip."

"But what's your rush?" Sammy came toward her. Johnny had moved uneasily about the room. It was his first view of society outside a Fifth Avenue restaurant's private dancing-rooms. He was

one dinky ring on a middle finger! He was almost ready to ask about that golden dining-room, when Goldie rose, with Kip beseeching her to say what was wrong, what he could do to make her remain.

"Why, presh, set down," Johnny began, but Goldie sniffed haughtily.

"All we want's our things. Get 'em," said Maizie, and she made a most unladylike face at Kip.

"But she'll be down in an instant—can't fancy what's keeping her, unless

one of the cursed maids got ill—always ailin'," said Kip, skipping before to head off the flight. "Oh, you mustn't, truly, dear girl! Do stay."

"She aint your dear girl—you whiffet!" said Maizie, and Kip was abashed.

"Gracia, come down!" he roared when they were all in the dim, wide hall. Above, a door shut sharply. Then it was opened, and Mrs. Kip said:

"In a moment, Amiel. Do be quiet. Go back and keep them amused."

INSIDE a blue, chintz-draped room on the second floor, a stout Frenchwoman stood on a chair, and with a broom tried to brush a small and leggy monkey from its perch on the end of a portière-pole. The monkey held a bird, from which fluffy yellow feathers dropped as he tore at them with his teeth. There were yellow and white feathers in his marauding feet, and the bird of paradise from Goldie's hat was rapidly becoming a ruin. Mrs. Kip, with a parasol, poked at him until he leaped down, when the intrepid maid caught him.

"Oh, wicked, miserable Koko!" cried Mrs. Kip, clutching the loot. "What can we do, Celeste? The tail's broken; the whole thing's in a frightful state! Here, I must have one on something—nothing like this, but you were a milliner and you've got to fix it. I do wish I'd seen the other one first, for he can dance, and then he realizes he's here to clown, and does."

"I have someseeng would do, I sink," said Celeste. "*Mon Dieu*, he 'as spoil a noble fezzet, m'm—you have not one like heem, but still—"

"If I tell her and get a new one, don't you see she'd have it on me, forever?"

"I SAID come down!" bellowed Kip from below.

"She'll bring 'em herself an' then spring that maid junk," said Goldie to Maizie, who bobbed her head sagely.

"Presh, you're puttin' me in awful Dutch," said Johnny, imploring her with his eyes. "Listen, I brang you here, an' now you're killin' me with my friends!"

Goldie sniffed. Maizie sniffed. Kip, on the other side of Goldie, again asked

if she wouldn't think it over. Sniffs answered him. It was some time before Mrs. Kip, bearing the outer garments of Goldie and Maizie, walked calmly down.

"If you must go, Miss Dailey, we shall have to bear it," she said coolly. "I'm afraid it's my hiring your husband for my act—isn't it? So sorry—he should have explained about your feelings."

"But she—Goldie don't mind our workin' together, Mis' Kip—she only got a bad pain—headache an' so on," faltered Johnny, but Goldie cried:

"This here treatment would give parties a pain, Mr. Trippit, but I'm leavin' 'cause they may hoodwink a man, but they can't me—that's why!"

"Good-by, Mr. Trippit," said Mrs. Kip, smiling coldly. Her smile warmed as it met Sammy Sanger.

"You needn't go," said she.

THE Trippits had the quarrel before they got to the street-corner.

"They're no more in society than we are, you poor creature," said Goldie, heaving. "They prob'ly rang in at the dances same as you, an' anyone can say they got forty millions an' Looey Cawnze doo-dads, if they don't get called—the woman's figgerin' to horn into the profession on your rep—but she sha'n't! You open Monday with Mis' Spies Kip, an' Trippit an' Dailey bust!"

"Look out, presh. I aint to be made no slave of," said Johnny, snorting.

"But it goes," said Goldie, her face whitening. "Me or society—choose!"

She meant it. Now that he was away from the Kips' plebeian sitting-room, Johnny remembered the night in the restaurant, when Mrs. Kip had told of the Kaiser, and the Kip yacht. He daringly said he loved ships, and she gaily said they'd have to take him, next time—how would he like to show an emperor his dancing? If he gave in now, there was no hope. And to agree was a blow to his manhood—Maizie would go around saying his wife was his boss. He wouldn't agree. His eyes said it, and his lips began, but Maizie screamed:

"Goldie Dailey, no wonder she was a long time up there! *They switched your bird of paradise!*"

A nippy river wind swirled Goldie's hair as she snatched off the hat. Johnny took it away from her.

"Lookit, if you doubt me," said Maizie. "Them aint the same tails. They're aigrettes an' swell ones, but it's never her bird!"

"An' I bought that bonnet," said Johnny, as if in argument with himself. "I bought it. The tail came 'way down at the back. This is a dinky tail."

"I'm goin' to the police," announced Goldie.

"No, don't you—you go home, an' I'll be there soon, but I'm goin' to take this to the Kips—listen, did you put my wallet some place, Goldie?"

"Me? Why, no, why would I?" Because he was feeling in all his pockets, Goldie thrust a hand into the ones he vacated.

"Much in it?" inquired Maizie.

"Just a trifle—about forty dollars," said Johnny, as he dejectedly signaled a prowling taxicab. He put some silver into Goldie's hand, and as if choking said:

"I—never in my life—a knockdown wallop like this! I lose that wallet back there! An' I can't git over it—but listen, there's one thing: you win. She can git another partner. I'll be back pretty quick—git in."

A FEW of Mrs. De Shine's paying guests were having prune pie and milk in the pantry when Goldie and Maizie went in. They were invited to partake, and did so, and because there are no secrets in vaudeville, between bites of prune and sups of milk the dreadful tale was related.

"Your chuffer left a packitch for John, dear, right after he'd took you to the place an' John said he could quit for the night," said the landlady. "Here it is—mercy sakes, Goldie, it aint the wallet he missed?"

"Dropped in the machine," said Goldie, and she clasped her hands.

"Well, he's in luck, then," said Birdie Gorham.

"Luck? It was thinkin' they copped it made him give her up," said Goldie. "Oh, my heavens, she'll get my Johnny from me! I'd better be dead, girls!"

Goldie sobbed drearily, and with an escort of her friends, she climbed to the first floor front.

"Mind, dollin', silence is your play, an' you're doin' what you should," said the landlady. She gave Goldie a loud kiss and went heavily down stairs.

"Would you?" asked Goldie, but Maizie, looking troubled, only said:

"Oh, I couldn't have it happen with Jim. He aint a swell looker an' dancer, like John, dear."

For half an hour, Goldie lay in bed, listening to cabs rolling past. Then one stopped, and so did her heart. Johnny came quietly in, turned on a light, and sighing, removed his dress coat.

"I aint asleep," said Goldie.

"I thought you was. I went back there, an' told them people where they got off at, presh. She'll have Sanger for her act, I guess."

"I wasn't goin' to keep on the cabaret work with him anyhow, Johnny. The smoke's awful for the voice, an' I don't like dancin' v' 'th anyone but you."

"I been one complete mark, baby doll. These Kips got the millions, all right, but I s'pose they're kleptomaniacs or sumpin. But me an' my society dream have fell out, an' it's you an' vaudeville for me."

He snapped off the light. In the dark his lips touched her soft, round cheek. She felt him stretching out, turning on his right side, the way he slept. He breathed more easily soon, and Goldie's pillow began to shake.

"What's the matter, presh?" he asked, and reached a gentle hand to her shaking head. Goldie gulped, and withdrawing from the hand, she wept:

"Bill found your wallet in the mamu-chine! An' I s'pose—there could been—some mistake about the—bird, so—your dream *aint*—over, John. I was goin' to keep still about findin' it, but oh, hon, I couldn't!"

"C'mere," said Johnny softly. "My dream *is* over, see? I like it over. An' I didn't go back there at all. I just stuck around an' thought! You'll see Monday it'll be Mis' Spies Kip assisted by Sam Sanger, an' the only show I'll be playin' is with my kiddo—huh?"

"You darlin' angel boy!" said Goldie.

A Complete Résumé of the Preceding Chapters of "THE ISLAND OF SURPRISE"

CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY gives, in "The Island of Surprise," a fascinating novel of love, adventure and dramatic surprises.

Robert Lovell, son of Godfrey Lovell, a Wall Street capitalist, employs Dorothy Arden, his father's most confidential secretary, to take the dictation of his first novel.

Miss Arden is beautiful and the daughter of a man who went bankrupt in a contest with Godfrey Lovell in "the Street." As the story progresses, it becomes apparent that young Lovell is modeling his heroine from her, and his hero from himself. Unconsciously he is making love to her through the pages of the book.

On the day the last of the story is dictated, Miss Arden, swept from her usual reserve, shows she is in love with the young writer. He believes there is an answering love in his heart. Miss Arden slips on a rug and is stunned by the fall. When she recovers, she is in Lovell's arms, and he is pouring words of love into her ears.

Miss Arden tells Lovell that his father had planned to marry him to Dorothy Cassilis, daughter of the Chicago financier who is his ally. Robert, in a burst of resentment, decides that he and Miss Arden shall be married at once. They hurry to the Little Church Around the Corner, and the ceremony is performed.

They return to the office to find that Godfrey Lovell has suffered a stroke which will necessitate his giving up all business. His physician orders him to take a cruise to the South Seas in his yacht.

ROBERT LOVELL is sent to Chicago to complete a deal which Godfrey Lovell and Daniel Cassilis are putting through. He goes reluctantly. His father joins him in Chicago, en route to San Francisco, to board the yacht, and insists on the son's accompanying him on the cruise. Robert makes a hurried trip to New York to see his wife, but finds she is gone from her apartment. The only clue to her whereabouts is the fragments of a telegram which, when pieced together, make only the words: "Can't do without.....need you.....take first train.....meet me."

Young Lovell is stunned. He decides to engage detectives in Chicago, and on his return from the cruise, to find the man who sent that telegram to his wife and settle with him.

Although he smarts under the supposed deception of his wife, he allows himself to admire another young woman on his train. A wreck precipitates her into his arms, and he finds her to be Dorothy Cassilis, returning to Chicago to say good-bye to her parents before their departure for the Lovell yacht. Lovell persuades her to go on the cruise, and so they make the trip west in each other's society, enjoying that trip to the utmost.

AT San Francisco they find Dorothy Arden aboard the yacht, as it was Godfrey Lovell's telegram that her young husband had found in her room. Her letters to Robert had been delayed, and now she knows of his lover-like attentions to Dorothy Cassilis. She meets him with scorn; and in her resentment she gives all of her attention to Dr. Elverson, Godfrey Lovell's physician, who openly shows his admiration for her. Lovell is furious and pays devoted court to Dorothy Cassilis.

Miss Arden discovers Lovell and Miss Cassilis on deck one night just as Miss Cassilis is telling Lovell that she loves him. Miss Arden breaks in and demands what relation Lovell and Miss Cassilis bear to each other. Miss Cassilis is insulted, and Lovell discovers he has put himself in a position where he must be shamed in both women's eyes when Miss Cassilis knows of his marriage.

The next day Miss Arden is compelled to chaperon Miss Cassilis and Lovell while they explore a South Sea island. A tempest comes up before the explorers can reach the yacht, which puts out to sea for safety. In their rush to reach the ship, they fall over a cliff. Lovell suffers a wound on the head. When he regains consciousness, Miss Arden has told Miss Cassilis that she is Lovell's wife. Miss Cassilis, thinking it an untruth, retorts that *she* is his wife. Miss Arden appeals to Lovell, and he, dazed with the loss of his memory, tells them he doesn't know either of them.

The yacht does not return. In their extremity Miss Arden takes command—finds food, builds a shelter, superintends nursing Lovell. No gleam of the truth comes to Lovell. Six years have dropped from his memory. While each fervently insists she is his wife, he is overwhelmed with the possibility that he may have acted such a scoundrelly part. He tells them he will accept neither till he learns what those last six years of his life have been.

Sometimes he was so tossed about in his heart that he almost hated both women.

The Island of Surprise

By Cyrus
Townsend Brady

Author of
"The Island of Regeneration," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY
WALTER TITTLE



the man had come back in fullest measure. Unfortunately, the return to health had brought about no restoration of memory. The question as to whose husband he was still remained entirely unsettled. After a time, at his own request the matter ceased to be discussed between them.

His mental condition certainly was not all that it should be. It seemed to the two women who watched him, and more especially to Dorothy Arden, who had the keener insight, that sometimes the cloud on his memory affected his mind a little; there was something lacking, on occasion, at any rate. Something more than recollection had gone. Not that he was at all unbalanced. His mind was as acute as it ever had been, his speech as rational, his thought as brilliant, his conversation as agreeable. The difference seemed largely temperamental. He was moody, changeable, as he previously never had been. His sunny disposition was subject to sudden reversals. His brow was sometimes knit with care, even

CHAPTER XIX

THE CAVE DWELLERS

THE month that had elapsed since Robert Lovell's momentous decision had put him in first-class physical condition once more. His health had been completely restored, and the natural vigor of

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pain. Sometimes he had to force himself to cheerfulness and courtesy. And sometimes he was brusque and abrupt. He was not always master of himself. On occasion he manifested a desire for human sympathy and affection to which the women were only too willing to respond.

Was there some subtle and hidden relationship between the inward man and that physical blow, or shock, which had deprived him of his recollection? Had he indeed lost something else besides his memory? They watched him anxiously and could not tell. Sometimes he left them in one of his black moods and wandered away to the other side of the island to spend the day alone, and to come back to them at nightfall weary but at peace again. Sometimes they were a little afraid of him. But generally he was what he had been and they could love him in their hearts without fear and without restraint. The savage moods happily were rare.

They had all been busy, and usually when night came they were thoroughly tired out. Lovell had wanted to do all the work, but the women had pointed out that it would be cruel to compel them to idleness. They had also called his attention to the fact that the rainy season might be upon them at any time; and certainly it would be in a few months; and unless they were ready for it, their condition would be miserable. To get ready would require the united efforts of all three.

They had, perforce, decided that some mishap must have befallen the yacht. Lovell thought she might have been cast away on some other island. Her non-arrival greatly increased their anxieties, for in her fate was involved the lives of those they loved.

This was not a case where no news was good news; still, there were so many possibilities of escape, even if the yacht had been wrecked, that they were not utterly cast down. As Lovell pointed out, the *Wanderer* was extraordinarily well found, in the best of condition, ably officered and efficiently manned. It was a certainty that if any of the people of the yacht reached any civilized port they would come themselves or send some one

back to the island. The stay of the trio, therefore, would in all probability not be prolonged indefinitely. Yet the safest plan was to make every preparation for a long sojourn. If they were rescued, no harm would be done, and it offered them pleasant occupation.

ONE day Lovell and the two women went on an excursion to the upland. Lovell had only casually explored the caves on the other side of the island on his previous visit, but he remembered enough to be sure that they would afford much better abiding places than the niche which had given them shelter. When the rainy season arrived, they could not always count on the direction of the wind, and if it should blow from seaward, the niche would be flooded to its farthest corner. Besides, something more substantial and permanent was needed than the wattled partitions and dried grass.

Things looked differently to Lovell in full health and strength and vigor than they did at the beginning of his convalescence, and for his own protection as well as for the protection of the women, he wanted more substantial divisions between them, and more privacy. One could not turn on the sand in the niche without the others being aware of the movement, did they chance to be awake.

The caves were like all coral caves, rugged, irregular, opening one from the other in the most confused way, but by searching they found one with an entrance on the plateau, and with a spring of delightfully cool, fresh water bubbling out of the rock in a far corner and falling away through crevices to subterranean depths till it reached the sea.

The entrance was in the face of a little cliff near the edge of a grove of palms which rose with the hill from the inward edge of the plateau. The opening was narrow, and it turned after running inward a few feet. That it would be an easy place to defend flashed into the man's mind when they stumbled upon it, although he did not believe there would be any need for defense on the island. He was satisfied that there were no fierce predatory animals to be provided against. To be sure, savages from the south might

come, but there was no evidence that any had been there for a long time, and Lovell hoped, indeed felt certain, he and his companions would be rescued before any came again. Nevertheless, with the instincts of a fighting animal, the man had seen that it would be a good place for defense and rejoiced thereat.

The interior of the cave was what decided him. The back of it was divided roughly into three arched niches, each of which could easily be made into an appropriate sleeping chamber by continuing the rock partitions and closing the ends. But this arrangement, again, did not exhaust the delightful possibilities of that particular hole in the wall. Centuries before, a gigantic palm had grown from a projection in the face of the cliff about twenty feet above the entrance. The recent storm had overthrown it. Its roots had penetrated through crevices well into the interior of the cave, and in falling it had dragged away portions of the rock, leaving an irregular opening about four feet square back of the shelf, which gave abundant light and air and which was still high enough above the ground to keep anyone from getting in unless by the use of some sort of a scaling ladder.

Outside, the perpendicular face of the rock was smooth. Inside, Lovell found he could climb up to this natural window without difficulty. The floor of the cave was of the native rock of the island covered with a sort of fine, dry sand, the dust of centuries, doubtless. These advantages he pointed out to the women, and they decided at once that here they would make their permanent abode. They still dwelt in the niche on the beach while they turned this cave into a fit habitation. The center niche, which was smallest, Lovell took for himself. He would have put the two girls side by side, but they forestalled him as each one selected one of the end recesses.

The storm had thrown down a good many trees. Lovell cut some of the smaller ones to shape with the invaluable ax and built up stout log partitions. He built two sides of the log house, as it were, and in the front and side he cut a low door. There was no clay on the island with which to chink the inter-

spaces, but small branches driven between the logs made tight partitions. On each girl's side the rough log surfaces were covered with rush mats, and they wove thick beds of rushes to sleep on.

The dinghy had been badly stove up, and after careful inspection, he decided it could not be made seaworthy. Out of her planking, and with nails drawn from her, he made two light, strong doors which could be lifted into place and held by bars and sockets. Hinges were beyond him, and they were not necessary. As the result of his labors, each woman had a sleeping room into which she could retire and which she could close by a door that was strong enough to give her absolute security.

Lovell wasted no time in making doors for his room. A wattled screen for privacy was all that was required in his case.

In the front of these rooms the cave extended for perhaps twenty feet, so that there would be abundant space for common use if they should be confined to the cave by the rains. They were not quite sure when the rainy season began, but there was as yet no promise of it in the skies. Indeed, the untimely storm which had caused their abandonment was the only one that had visited the island since they landed upon it. The cave was thoroughly dry in every part.

AS the weather was so delightful, they lived and worked in the open air, only retiring to the cave at night. On a shelf in the rock of his own room Lovell had carefully placed the rifle and the pistol. He had not fired a single shot from either. There were birds on the island, but the cartridges might be more valuable than the meal which the bird would afford. Both weapons had been well oiled, and in that dry atmosphere they did not rust, but he wondered what the rainy season would do to them. Lovell had tried to extract some fat from the fish that they caught, improvising hooks from hairpins, but had not been successful. He hoped before the rainy season to have arrived at some process for getting some fat or natural oil. The cocoanuts contained oil, but how to try it out he did not know.



The hand that presented the automatic was as steady as a rock in spite of her nervous excitement and internal agitation.



"Because I love you still, God help me," she said slowly, "I should hate to kill you, but if you come a step nearer—"

Following the example of the women, he had laid away his civilized clothing, if the soiled remains of his flannel suit could be so described, and was now dressed like the women in a tunic of woven reed fabric. It was cool and comfortable, and although it was not very lasting, all the cloth they wanted was theirs for the making. By doubling pieces of the tarpaulin over for soles, he had made excellent moccasins for all three.

The man would have given worlds for a razor, but that was not to be thought of. His short and curly beard had to remain, and when his hair grew long he had to let it grow. The scissors and knife of the ditty bag had become dull from cutting the hard tarpaulin, and although he could sharpen the knife after a fashion, he could do nothing with the scissors. And the dainty little gold-mounted pair from Dorothy Cassilis' vanity bag had scarcely survived their use during his illness.

Two months had given these three people—products of the highest civilization, each a mold of fashion and glass of form, who could scarcely have appeared anywhere in the civilized world without attracting attention—the outward and visible aspect of savages. Except for their fair skins a casual glance might have identified them with the aborigines of the islands.

The primitive raiment on Dorothy Arden was quite in keeping with her dark hair, her olive complexion, her dark arms and shoulders. It was less suited to Dorothy Cassilis, although even in her case it was not an unbecoming dress. The sun had left its mark upon both of them. Dorothy Arden seemed to imbibe some glorious touch of golden color from its rays. Dorothy Cassilis was devoutly thankful that she was a blonde who did not burn crimson, and as with Dorothy Arden, the sun only served to enrich the brilliance of her color. They protected their heads when they went abroad in the heat of the day, with conical hats that Dorothy Cassilis had woven out of the rushes.

At Lovell's suggestion, conventional titles had been discarded. At first he had thought it would be well for them to

use their Christian names in conversation, but as both women had been called Dorothy he saw that would not answer. Finally by agreement they addressed each other by their surnames. It was "Lovell" and "Cassilis" and "Arden" on the island.

Some sort of a *modus vivendi* of necessity had arisen between the two women. In the first place, they had to be thrown together in their work. In the second place, Lovell himself effected it by forcing them to enter into general conversation of which he was the pivot. It was not so difficult to bring this about while they had so much work to do to occupy their hands and brains, but when all that they had planned had been completed and they had little occupation save that they might find in the enjoyment of life, conditions speedily changed. They were willing enough to go together when there was any work to be done, but simply to stroll about the island side by side to explore it for pleasure was another matter. Each woman was deeply jealous of the other, and the jealousy increased rather than diminished. Yet the hatred in which they mutually shared finally operated to bring about a state of affairs in which Lovell was left in turn to one or the other. If he walked in the morning with Dorothy Arden, Dorothy Cassilis remained at the camp, and in the afternoon the conditions would be reversed. And each woman used her hours and opportunities to press her suit, to make love to the man, to use every gentle and delicate art to establish her contention and make good her claim. The constraint which had been somewhat broken had developed again.

The proverbial possibilities of idleness speedily developed. The day's work was soon done. To catch fish, to gather fruit, to prepare some sago flour, to add a few sticks to the huge pyre Lovell had built as a signal on the very edge of the promontory at the end of the plateau—this completed the round of daily duties. The preparation of the meals, which was a simple matter indeed, was attended to by the women in turn. In such idyllic idleness the firmer fibers inevitably relaxed a little.

The man found himself growing more

interested in both of these women. He began to make love to them in turn. It would have required an adamantine indifference to womankind to have maintained the position he had taken at first, in view of the open and undisguised effort each woman made to interest him in herself. At first he thought he cared more for Dorothy Cassilis, yet in spite of this interest in her he could not regard Dorothy Arden with indifference. When she was with him, he had to pay tribute to her ability and personality. Away from both, he thought oftener of the less dominant one of the pair. In his tenderer, saner, sweeter moods it was Dorothy Cassilis; in his black and savage hours, Dorothy Arden was more appealing. And sometimes so tossed about was he in his heart that he almost hated them both.

CHAPTER XX

ROBERT LOVELL KISSES HIS WIFE

DOROTHY ARDEN, mistakenly or otherwise, became persuaded that her husband inclined toward Dorothy Cassilis. Although filled with dismay, she was not a woman to give up. During the first days of their cave sojourn, she had held rather disdainfully aloof, watching the other woman's coquettries with scorn. That this was an error in judgment was soon evident. When she saw the effect upon the man she bestirred herself.

Lovell soon found that Dorothy Arden could be as fascinating as Dorothy Cassilis, and in certain ways more so. She had a larger outlook on life, a more richly stored mind, she could talk brilliantly on subjects about which Dorothy Cassilis knew and cared nothing. She exhibited an almost masculine grasp of affairs. Not that she was in the least degree unwomanly, although perhaps she was slightly undersexed. Dorothy Cassilis, on the contrary, was slightly oversexed. Yet Dorothy Arden was intensely feminine at times, and Dorothy Cassilis could rise to rugged heights on occasion. Dorothy Cassilis found the sailing not quite so easy when Dorothy Arden entered the lists.

Robert Lovell must not be written down as a vacillating weakling, so infirm of purpose that he was incapable of constancy and without persistence. Allowance must be made for a man with two unusual and extraordinary women, each of whom had declared herself his wife. It had been apparently easy for him to reject them both at first, but now the situation was quite different. He had cared nothing for either of them before; now he was in love with one or the other, or both of them. And especially was it hard for him to follow the path he had marked out when his head throbbed with pain and he fell into one of his dark, tempestuous moods. For in such periods of depression it was with great difficulty that he could retain his self-command and think clearly. Often he sought safety in flight.

His days were days of happiness, mainly, with one or the other of the lovers. Whichever woman was nearer to him seemed at the time the more desirable. He half wished he could have them both.

Jealousy blinds as well as love. The two women did not realize that they were playing with fire, or if they did, the warmth of the blaze stimulated their inclination to continue the play. To sit beneath the shade of the palms on some headland high-upraised, overlooking the dreamy sea, with the man she loved, was Heaven itself to Dorothy Arden. And that was equally true of Dorothy Cassilis. Save for the possibilities of the future, which she strove to forget, she also was entirely happy.

Some rudimentary feelings of fair play had operated to keep each woman from spying on the other; and neither ever mentioned the other to Lovell, or knew what happened in those hours in which her rival was alone with him.

Because of her consciousness of the reality of the tie that bound her, Dorothy Arden allowed herself a little greater freedom with her husband, and as like begets like, Lovell came into more intimate personal touch with the woman who was really his wife than with the woman who loved him and hoped some day she might be what she declared she was.



"Oh," wailed Dorothy Cassilis as Dorothy Arden lifted her up, "you saved me." "It is not because I care for you, but because you are a woman," said Dorothy Arden bluntly. "Let us go back to the cave,"

The torn, bewildered man really put strong constraint upon himself. If he had been left alone, he might have pursued the impartial and indifferent course he had marked out for himself; but he was not left alone either by one or by the other.

He fought hard against any betrayal of preference, but in vain. The witchery of each woman was indisputable. They exercised over him a peculiar charm on account of the very difference between them. If he could only settle the matter to his satisfaction, he thought he would be content to pass the rest of his days in the idyllic life of this unvisited Eden.

THUS it fell out upon a morning soft and gentle, with Dorothy Arden by his side under the refreshing shade of the tall palms, when her hand strayed to his as it lay on the grass, that he suddenly turned and swept her to his breast. She had been half reclining, and he had bent over her. For a moment in her surprise she had put out her hand to turn him away, whereat he had risen to his feet—somehow the throbbing exaltation of his heart forced him upward. As he reached a standing position he lifted her up with him, and then he fairly crushed her to his heart.

She drew her head back and looked up into his face. There was love in the man's eyes, undoubtedly that, but was there recognition? Could it be that he had at last remembered she was his wife? She had time for no more thoughts, for he bent and kissed her again with a passionate tenderness that brought the blood to her cheeks, that took her breath away. She struggled a moment, and then she gave him kiss for kiss; her arms went round him, and they stood heart to heart under the trees. The golden sun of midday reflected from the calm, blue sea beyond them flooded the island with heat and pulsating light. It was very still in the dusky shadow of the great palms. The perfumed breeze touched them as with a faint caress. There was scarcely power enough in it to stir the gorgeous petals on the fragrant blossoms which grew on every hand.

Finally Dorothy Arden found voice, drawing away from Lovell a little, yet still within his arms, and putting her hand against his mouth to check him until she had spoken.

"You know that I am your wife, that I told you the truth, that I belong to you and you to me?"

"Yes, yes," answered the man through her fingers that pressed his lips. "You are my wife, and I love you."

"Thank God," exclaimed the girl. "I have waited for this acknowledgment—" She bent her head until it lay on his breast.

He bent and kissed that glorious head, marveling that he had won such love.

"Come," she said at last, drawing herself away, "we shall go and tell that other woman that you know the truth at last." Her eyes searched his face eagerly; and as she looked, her own filled with swiftly rising apprehension. "You do remember—do you not?" she asked.

Yes, of course he remembered, but there was something lacking in his answer. The girl's face whitened. She put her hand against her heart. It had beaten so fiercely before—it almost stopped now.

"Lovell—" she cried. "Robert, I can't believe—oh, my God!"

"Believe nothing but that I love you," he protested.

He sought to draw her to him again, but she held him off.

"I seem to understand," said Lovell slowly, fighting down his accusing conscience; and such was the respect as well as the love she inspired in him that he felt utterly unable to deceive her.

"What did you say to me when you held me in your arms in your office that day we were married?" she asked suddenly, putting him to the test.

If he could tell her, she would know that he remembered and that he knew that she was his wife. But she did not give the man time to answer, for she saw in the swift alteration of his face that he could not tell her. She stepped back from him and drew herself away.

"I will be no plaything," she burst out in bitter grief. "What a fool I have been! I thought you took me into your arms as your wife, not as a wild woman

on a desert island without law, or love, or God."

"But I do love you," persisted the man, coming closer. "You mistake, you wrong me. I will be honest with you. I can't lie to you even for your love. But what difference does that make? I love you; you cannot doubt it with the memory of those kisses still in your heart. I ask nothing but your love. I will wait. I only want to be loved. I—"

"And will you tell that to her?" she broke in. "No, you cannot," she continued, watching his changing face, "and I will not be anything to you, now or ever, until you know."

"Don't say that," he pleaded. "What if I don't know, what if I never know? I love you with all my heart. Wont you kiss me again?"

He stepped closer toward her, his eyes pleading. She had never loved him so much, perhaps, as at that moment, yet she did not give back or give way an inch.

As with outstretched arms he drew near to her, she suddenly pushed him away. She miscalculated the force of her thrust. It caught him with one foot in the air. He reeled, staggered, and with difficulty kept himself from falling. When he steadied himself again, she was gone. He could see her running out from under the trees and across the open toward the rude cave they had come to call home.

Woman running from man toward her cave, as it might have been in the stone age! He took a step in her direction, then stopped, ashamed and yet not hopeless. The island was small; she was a woman. He was a man, and his love was strong. There would be another day. He would have another opportunity to plead his love.

Dorothy Arden brushed by Dorothy Cassilis, busy with the fire at the cave mouth. Her face was white and drawn. Her look was one of anguish. Dorothy Cassilis had risen to her feet as she saw Dorothy Arden coming toward her on flying feet. She caught at her garment as she endeavored to pass. It parted, and Dorothy Arden turned in a passion, almost glad of the interruption.

"What has happened?" cried Dorothy

Cassilis. "Why do you run and look so? Where is Lovell?"

"Go and find out," was the rude answer. "Let go of me. I don't want you to touch me—or him either."

CHAPTER XXI

NOR TRUTH NOR LIE WILL SERVE.

DOROTHY CASSILIS had marked the direction whence Dorothy Arden had come. She knew the spot. It was one of the most beautiful on the island, and she recognized, what she had already suspected, that it was not sacred to Lovell and herself, and that even as she had passed happy hours there with the man, so also had Dorothy Arden. Well, what of that! Something had happened, something of a serious nature. What it was she could not say. She had no clue except in Dorothy Arden's heartbroken face. Instantly she had jumped to the conclusion that her rival had received a rebuff. She could not refrain from joying in that triumphant assumption as she walked rapidly toward the man, whom she could now see in the distance.

As if to shut out the sight of things external so that he might have more freedom of consideration, Lovell had sat down, drawn up his knees, and rested his arms upon them and buried his face.

Dorothy Arden had unmistakably represented any affectionate demonstrations not based on an acknowledgment that she was his wife. In his soul he admired her the more on that account, yet as he thought longer in the silence, a good deal of human resentment entered his heart. For the moment he half wished that he had said he did recall the marriage.

Habitually he contrasted the two women, and particularly did he do so on this day in his disappointment. He wondered whether Dorothy Cassilis would have displayed the same characteristics in the same situation. He was perhaps not so fond of Dorothy Cassilis as of Dorothy Arden, because he knew that Dorothy Arden was the nobler woman. Yet she had rejected him by imposing impossible conditions—and

this after she had kissed him. It was maddening. His resentment grew. At last he deliberately made up his mind to apply to Dorothy Cassilis the same test that Dorothy Arden had passed so successfully and brilliantly. He would show Dorothy Arden that he could not be so trifled with. He would make her more jealous than she had ever been before, which would be saying a great deal.

Perhaps the blow on his head and the shock he sustained had affected his nature as well as his physical being. If he succeeded with Dorothy Cassilis, what would his course be, what would his future be? He did not go that far. All his thoughts were simply to test her as he had tested the first. And if she proved unequal to the test, what then? Was there back in his consciousness a desire, which even he did not recognize, to learn which was the better woman, in order that in his saner moments he might choose which one might be his wife?

What would the other woman do? He heard her come through the leaves in the stillness. He did not even lift his head. He waited. Her soft, sweet hand fell gently on his shoulder. He slowly lifted his head and looked at her. His face was haggard and drawn. The sight of her determined him. Dorothy Cassilis was less subtle, less penetrating than Dorothy Arden, less given to analysis. She was more simply woman. Her heart went out to him. She forgot or overlooked everything but that he was in trouble and that she loved him and pitied him.

"What has she done to you?" she asked—woman-like, investing her rival with all the blame.

"What did she tell you?" returned the man.

"Nothing. She tore by me, her face full of anger."

"Sit here by my side," said Lovell.

Was there anything indicative in the fact that when he spoke to Dorothy Arden he rose to his feet, that while he talked to Dorothy Cassilis he had her sit down by his side? Tremulously, almost shyly, she complied with his command.

"Not there," he said, leaning toward her and stretching out his arm and drawing her closer to him.

"You won't hurt me?" said the girl tremulously.

"Hurt you! I love you; is not that enough?"

"But love sometimes hurts," was the answer.

And Dorothy Cassilis, just as her sister had done, laid her hand upon her heart, as if she already experienced the pang.

"It may be, but is there any pleasure to compare with the pain of this?"

It was the second time that day that he had taken a woman to his heart. It was the second time he had felt the beat of a woman's heart upon his breast. Yet it was the other who flashed into his mind then!

"You said," he continued, holding her close, as if to stifle his conscience, "that you were my wife."

"Yes," murmured the girl.

He tried to lift up her head as she bent lower and turned it away. Dorothy Cassilis was appalled. He had no right to kiss her. Yet to draw back now would be to confess the truth, to give up everything. She found herself enmeshed, innocently enough but nevertheless actually, in the toils of her own deceit, and that her deceit had been for a—to her at least—worthy end did not make the situation any easier. And that she loved this man and would have died for him, that the strength went out of her at his touch, at his words, was not enough to quiet her conscience.

Lovell put his hand to her face gently but firmly and turned it toward him. What he saw there startled him. There was something so sweet, so timid, so innocent and yet so fearful, that it should have given him pause. She loved him, beyond doubt, yet she was afraid.

Lovell did not know why she was so much more terrified than Dorothy Arden had been. He did not dream that her claim was no less firmly based on fact and truth than that of the other woman.

With the kisses of Dorothy Arden still warm upon his lips, he bent to this girl and kissed her, pressed her close. She murmured words of endearment to

match his own. And then at last, just as the other woman had done, she said to him:

"I am your wife. I am your own before God and the world." And the world, to her again as to her sister, was only the other woman. "Let us go to her and tell her that you have decided between us."

How could the man look Dorothy Arden, that clear-eyed, outraged goddess, in the face, that woman whom but an hour before he had clasped in his arms, and tell her that he had changed his mind and loved another? What would she, what could she, think of love like that?

"Why say anything to her at all?" he said at last. "She is nothing to me. Let her make her claims as much as she pleases while you and I laugh in secret and—"

She shook her head.

"I cannot," she answered, but without the resentment she should have felt. As yet she was only bewildered.

"And why? You are my wife. You recall the day—"

Lovell stopped suddenly as he realized that she had not yet asked him, as the other, if he recalled that day in San Francisco when the yacht went away. He did not remember, of course, but this time he would make no mistake.

"You mean that afternoon—in—in San Francisco when we—were—married?" she faltered.

"Yes," was the prompt answer. "I remember it all now, at last."

She looked at him in amazement, sick at heart.

"You remember!" she exclaimed.

Her eyes grew dark with fear and suspicion. Did he know at last that she had lied? She would lead him on.

"Yes?" she began again, carefully averting her face lest he should see the truth. "Tell me just what happened."

"I have forgotten much, I confess," said Lovell, glibly, "but my love for you has brought the essentials back to me. I remember that we went ashore after lunch that day—he had learned by judicious questioning that much. "Then we took a taxi"—in his turn he too looked carefully away, because he

wasn't a good liar, and he feared as much as she that she might see the truth; and he was so absorbed in preventing her from realizing his gross deceit that he did not observe her edging away from him. "Then we drove to the license bureau, got a license—"

"Yes, yes, go on," said the girl—and if he had not been so preoccupied, he would have seen that she knew he was lying.

"Then we went to the church and were married."

"Oh, my God!" cried Dorothy Casilis as he faced her at last.

The same appeal it was that had fallen from Dorothy Arden's lips. She flung herself down on the grass on her face. Her body shook and quivered. Her throat was choked with sobs.

"And so," continued Lovell, blundering into his doom, "I recognize that you are my wife and that Dorothy Arden is not." He rose to his feet and stepped over to her. "I cannot bear to see you suffer so. I don't know why you felt this way. You have gained your end. I acknowledge your claim."

He sought to lift her up, but she would not permit, and from where she lay she asked him:

"Will you tell the other woman this?"

"I shall never speak to her about it as long as I live," he said evasively, for somehow he could not bring himself to comply with that request.

And this time she did suffer him to lift her up until she stood erect before him.

"And you remember all that?" she asked.

She was willing, anxious to give him one more chance to clear himself, realizing now that he remembered nothing. She was a weaker woman than Dorothy Arden, and Lovell had fallen low in her esteem; she could not respect him as she had; and yet she loved him, although she despised herself for it. Lovell was bewildered by these sudden changes, but he swept her to his breast again.

"Let me go," she cried; "you don't understand. I almost hate you."

But by now Lovell's bewilderment had turned to anger. He determined to subdue the woman and teach her that he

was master. Despite her cries for help and her scratching blows upon his face, he held her in his arms.

CHAPTER XXII

WHEN WOMAN CALLED TO WOMAN

INTO the fray came Dorothy Arden.

The first paroxysm of her grief and disappointment spent, she had risen from her bed and gone out of the cave. At the entrance she had looked for Dorothy Cassilis. She was not there. The fire was low; evidently she had been gone for some time. Where had she gone? To seek Lovell, of course. Her jealousy quickened.

That tacit agreement which had been maintained between the two women that neither should spy on the other was not an infallible one. In such an emergency it ought to be broken, and she would break it. She ran rapidly through the trees, presently arriving at a little thicket of undergrowth whence she could clearly observe the course of events, but without hearing what was said. She crouched and watched. She saw Dorothy Cassilis

sitting by Lovell's side on the grass. She saw Lovell kiss her. She grew blind, mad, with rage and jealousy.

Scarcely knowing what she did, formulating no purpose, yet conscious of a wild desire to kill the other woman she so hated, she ran back to the cave. She tore open the screen that covered Lovell's niche. She seized the pistol and retraced her steps. As she came again, a scream broke on her ear. She stopped short. What could it mean?

She saw the two figures struggling under the trees. Dorothy Cassilis was not to be made love to that way. In spite of herself a thrill of pride, the pride of sex, went through her heart. The same courageous blood ran in the veins of her sister whom she had called contemptuously the weaker woman.

As she came in full view of the struggle, the resentment in her face faded, jealousy was superseded by pity. After all, Dorothy Cassilis was a woman. She was trapped in her own deceit, but she was a woman; she was caught in a web of her own devious weaving, but she

(Continued on following page)

What is an Internal Bath?

By R. W. BEAL

MUCH has been said and volumes have been written describing at length the many kinds of baths civilized man has indulged in from time to time. Every possible resource of the human mind has been brought into play to fashion new methods of bathing, but, strange as it may seem, the most important, as well as the most beneficial of all baths, the "Internal Bath," has been given little thought. The reason for this is probably due to the fact that few people seem to realize the tremendous part that internal bathing plays in the acquiring and maintaining of health.

If you were to ask a dozen people to define an internal bath, you would have as many different definitions, and the probability is that not one of them would be correct. To avoid any misconception as to what constitutes an internal bath, let it be said that a hot water

enema is no more an internal bath than a bill of fare is a dinner.

If it were possible and agreeable to take the great mass of thinking people to witness an average post-mortem, the sights they would see and the things they would learn would prove of such lasting benefit and impress them so profoundly that further argument in favor of internal bathing would be unnecessary to convince them. Unfortunately, however, it is not possible to do this, profitable as such an experience would doubtless prove to be. There is, then, only one other way to get this information into their hands, and that is by acquainting them with such knowledge as will enable them to appreciate the value of this long-sought-for, health-producing necessity.

Few people realize what a very little thing is necessary sometimes to improve their physical condition. Also, they have almost no con-

ception of how a little carelessness, indifference or neglect can be the fundamental cause of the most virulent disease. For instance, that universal disorder from which almost all humanity is suffering, known as "constipation," "auto-intoxication," "auto-infection," and a multitude of other terms, is not only curable but preventable through the consistent practice of internal bathing.

How many people realize that normal functioning of the bowels and a clean intestinal tract make it impossible to become sick? "Man of to-day is only fifty per cent efficient." Reduced to simple English, this means that most men are trying to do a man's portion of work on half a man's power. This applies equally to women.

That it is impossible to continue to do this indefinitely must be apparent to all. Nature never intended the delicate human organism to be operated on a hundred per cent overload. A machine could not stand this and not break down, and the body certainly cannot do more than a machine. There is entirely too much unnecessary and avoidable sickness in the world.

How many people can you name, including yourself, who are physically vigorous, healthy, and strong? The number is appallingly small.

It is not a complex matter to keep in condition, but it takes a little time, and in these strenuous days people have time to do everything else necessary for the attainment of happiness but the most essential thing of all—that of giving their bodies their proper care.

Would you believe that five to ten minutes of time devoted to systematic internal bathing can make you healthy and maintain your physical efficiency indefinitely? Granting that such a simple procedure as this will do what is claimed for it, is it not worth while to learn more about that which will accomplish this end? Internal Bathing will do this, and it will do it for people of all ages and in all conditions of health and disease.

People don't seem to realize, strange to say, how important it is to keep the body free from accumulated body-waste (poisons). Their doing so would prevent the absorption into the blood of the poisonous excretions of the body, and health would be the inevitable result.

If you would keep your blood pure, your heart normal, your eyes clear, your complexion clean, your mind keen, your blood pressure normal, your nerves relaxed, and be able to enjoy the vigor of youth in your declining years, practice internal bathing and begin to-day.

Now that your attention has been called to the importance of internal bathing, it may be that a number of questions will suggest themselves to your mind. You will probably want to know WHAT an Internal Bath is, WHY people should take them, and the WAY to take them. These and countless other questions are all answered in a booklet entitled "THE WHAT, THE WHY and THE WAY OF INTERNAL BATHING," written by Doctor Chas. A. Tyrrell, the inventor of the "J. B. L. Cascade," whose lifelong study and research along this line make him the pre-eminent authority on this subject. Not only has internal bathing saved and prolonged Dr. Tyrrell's own life, but the lives of a multitude of hopeless individuals have been equally spared and prolonged. No book has ever been written containing such a vast amount of practical information to the business man, the worker, and the housewife; all that is necessary to secure this book is to write to Dr. Chas. A. Tyrrell at Number 134 West 65th Street, New York City, and mention having read this article in *The Red Book*, and same will be immediately mailed to you free of all cost or obligation.

Perhaps you realize now, more than ever, the truth of these statements and if the reading of this article will result in a proper appreciation on your part of the value of internal bathing, it will have served its purpose. What you will want to do now is to avail yourself of the opportunity for learning more about the subject, and your writing for this book will give you that information. Do not put off doing this, but *send for the book now* while the matter is fresh in your mind.

"Procrastination is the thief of time." A thief is one who steals something. Don't allow procrastination to cheat you out of your opportunity to get this valuable information which is free for the asking. If you would be natural, be healthy. It is unnatural to be sick. Why be unnatural, when it is such a simple thing to be well?



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was a woman. Great was the appeal of sex to sex, of weakness to weakness. It triumphed even over love, jealousy and possession. For the moment Dorothy Arden almost hated Lovell. That he should slip so lightly from one woman to the other, from a first love to a second, was shattering to her trust. Was he worth anything? All her anger swiftly veered from the woman to the man.

Holding the pistol, which she knew how to use, Dorothy Arden moved quickly toward the struggling two, and Dorothy Cassilis' frightened eyes caught sight of her.

"Help!" she cried. "If you are a woman, help me."

The meaning of the words penetrated Lovell's maddened brain. He realized that the other woman was there. He turned his head to see; his grasp naturally relaxed a little. By one last effort Dorothy Cassilis tore herself away. She made a step or two in the direction of the other woman and fell prostrate, trembling, broken, exhausted; and Dorothy Arden sprang to her side.

"And so," she said with horrible scorn, "you made love to her in the same hour, did you?"

LOVELL stared, speechless. As the consequences of his actions came to him, a burning wave of shame and humiliation warmed his cheeks. The black madness of the past few minutes passed as swiftly as it had come. He sought for words of exculpation and found none. Justification was impossible, he realized. Yet he must do something. He put out his hands entreatingly. He opened his mouth to explain, but Dorothy Arden was in no mood to hear. She could not think or see clearly enough to comprehend his position. The hand that presented the automatic was as steady as a rock in spite of her nervous excitement and internal agitation.

"Because I love you still, God help me," she said slowly, "I should hate to kill you, but if you come a step nearer—"

Lovell dropped his hands and forced himself to look directly at her. Even in his misery and shame he could read purpose in the woman's eyes. The very steadiness of the hand that held the weapon—and at that short range she could not have missed him—bade him beware. There was no time for explanation then; no apology would suffice if uttered. He looked from the prostrate figure of one woman at his feet to the standing figure of the other woman confronting him. He could never explain; he could never justify himself. It was hopeless.

"I have been mad," he whispered hoarsely, covering his eyes with his hands. "I don't know what I did. Is my memory coming back? I seem to recall—" He looked at her a long time. "Are you my wife? Oh, God, are you my wife?"

"Whatever I am," said the woman, "I am nothing to you now. Go!"

"But I wonder—"

"We shall be watchful. We shall be ready, and if you approach either one of us—"

The man did not give her time to finish her sentence. He could not bear to hear another word. He turned away and plunged recklessly across the open. Dorothy Arden watched him go, while Dorothy Cassilis lay sobbing at her feet. She watched him until he disappeared through the gate or pass in the rocks that led from the plateau down to the beach.

"Come," she said, stooping over her prostrate sister. "He is gone; let us go back to the cave."

"Oh," wailed Dorothy Cassilis as Dorothy Arden lifted her up, "you saved me."

"It is not because I care for you, but because you are a woman," said Dorothy Arden bluntly. "Let us go back to the cave."

"You must not leave me alone," faltered Dorothy Cassilis.

"I hate you still, but we shall have to stay together now," said Dorothy Arden.

The next—and in many ways the most surprising—installment of "The Island of Surprise" will be in the July Red Book Magazine, on the news-stands June 23rd.

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The Birth of a Butterfly

By Gordan V. May

AT peace with all the world, Mr. Jonah Snefnacker entered his cozy little flat on Eighth Avenue. Business had been especially good at the butcher-shop; he had unexpectedly collected an old bill; all was well. Now for a good supper, such as Maria (he could never get to calling her Mirabelle, the name their daughter had given her when she started the high-school course) was famous for cooking. Then his slippers, a corn-cob pipe and the evening papers!

A distinct odor of frying onions assaulted his nostrils as he opened the door. Hamburger steak—yum, yum! He drew a deep breath in gastronomic anticipation, as he hung his hat on the head of a plaster Mercury and pushed on into the kitchen that he might greet the wife of his bosom with a due mark of his affection.

Mrs. Snefnacker was not in evidence, however. Azalia bent over the range, her cheeks flushed with the heat.

"Where's Ma?" he inquired, crossing to the sink.

Azalia raised her head long enough to note the speaker, then returned to her task. "In the bedroom, dressing."

"Dressing?" Jonah paused with the soap in his hands. "Has she had another spell?"

"No." There was impatience in the tone. "We are going out to-night."

"Where?"

"To a real show. Good heavens, Pa, you don't suppose we can stick in this poky old flat all our lives, do you? Mr. Weidmeyer is going to take me, and Mother goes along as chaperon."

Jonah sniffed. Then, having finished his simple ablutions, he entered the bedroom, just off the kitchen, to find his slippers. The sight that met his gaze staggered him. Before a mirror, Mrs. Snefnacker was daubing her plump cheeks with a wad of cotton, liberally sprinkled with a pink powder. Her ample form was encased in a purple gown that fitted her so tightly as to make Jonah think of some of his liver-wurst.

She noticed him through the glass and faced him with a last stab at her nose with the cotton. "You see!" she began dramatically. "I've begged and begged you to take me out. But no. The Morris chair, a smelly pipe and the evening paper is your limit. Now I'm going with Azalia and her young man." She paused as if to note the effect on her recalcitrant spouse; and, not being entirely satisfied, she added with a tantalizing inflection: "Perhaps I may find *some other man* who is not too tired to give me a good time."

This thrust found its mark. Jonah gasped. "Good Lord, Maria, I—"

"Maria?" challenged his wife.

"Ma—er—I mean Mirabelly. I—I—" He paused and wiped his face with a florid bandanna. "You—you don't mean—"

"I mean I'm tired of trying to drag you out of your shell. It's just as Azalia says: you're a grub. I've been a faithful wife to you all these years, and what have I got?" She rested her hands on her hips, and glared at him as if daring him to answer.

"Well, we've got a good business, and



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According to direction I used it during the late fall and early winter, returning to it at intervals as I thought I required it with the best results. I join therefore the number of those grateful ones who have given voluntary testimony to its virtue, as evidenced it and a duty to the general public which may be profited by its use.

Sincerely,
Harry Watterson

twelve hundred dollars in the bank, and —" Jonah rubbed his pudgy hand reflectively across the bald spot on his head.

"Yes, and what else? Have I ever been to a really swell theater? No. Have I ever had supper at one of those high-toned restaurants? No. Did I ever ride in a taxi? No. Did I ever get a chance to dance one of those tango things? No. Why? Because my husband is a grub. That's a good name for you, Jonah Snefnacker: a grub. Well, you can just go on being a grub if you want to. I'm a butterfly, and I'm going to flit from flower to flower, sipping the nectar of pleasure."

"But — but — another man —" This was the one vital point in the whole vague harangue to Jonah.

Mrs. Snefnacker understood, and she gloated over her triumph. "Yes, another man. The papers are full of stories about poor, neglected wives, like me, who have to go out and find somebody to take their grubby husband's place, when they want a little pleasure." She picked up a wrap and flung it across her arm. "Azalia's got your supper on the table. You can eat, and read, and smoke all night if you want to."

Jonah started afresh. "Haint you going to eat with me, even?" he demanded in alarm.

She swept by him, leaving an overpowering odor of new-mown hay in the room. "What? Onions before going out? I guess not. Mr. Weidmeyer has invited us to dinner before the show, and a supper at one of those swell places where you can tango, afterward."

TOO much overwhelmed fully to grasp the enormity of his misfortune, Jonah stumbled on into the little parlor beyond and sank into his well-worn Morris chair. As in a dream he heard the unusual preparation in the adjoining rooms, followed by the hasty slamming of a door. Then all was still. They had gone. He groped for his evening paper, usually lying on the window-sill beside his chair. He picked it up and glanced, without interest, at the heavy headlines, telling all the latest developments, real and assumed, of the "European Situa-

tion." By some perversity of fate, his eyes lighted on a small item halfway down the page.

SAYS HUSBAND DIDN'T TREAT HER RIGHT

Jonah started, sat up, stared at the objectionable heading, and then hastily turned a page. Here his glance fell upon—

MARITAL INFELICITIES

WOMAN ASKS DIVORCE BECAUSE HUSBAND IS BOOKWORM.

Jonah kicked the paper under a stand and rose unsteadily to his feet. Already grim pictures of separation, divorce, correspondents and other unknown but hideous addenda to a broken home, flitted through his brain. He found his way to the kitchen. One lone plate, with its accompaniment of knife and fork, cup and saucer, stood disconsolately on the table, along with a solemn loaf of bread and an economical smear of butter, while three small meat-cakes huddled together on a flat dish, as if for mutual companionship. Somehow the odor he had inhaled with such gusto at his entrance nauseated him now, and he turned disgustedly away. He took down his pipe from the shelf, filled it and drew two long puffs. In the cloud of smoke he seemed to see his wife's head, bobbing up and down in company with some other. . . .

An hour later—an hour spent in meditations that grew more and more gloomy—Jonah sighed and, getting to his feet, went to the window. Just outside was the pulley-line. With stoical deliberation he untied it and drew the long rope into the room. He surveyed as much of his own well-built form as a highly developed stomach would permit, and tested the rope over the kitchen door. The door creaked ominously, but the strands held.

He glanced about, vaguely wondering just which room was the proper one in which to shuffle off this mortal coil. Maria and Azalia were such sticklers for etiquette. He hated to contemplate the possibility of making a *faux pas*, even in dying.

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THE BIRTH OF A BUTTERFLY

He tried to recall such violent deaths, but the only ones that came to his mind were of a man who had jumped out of a fourth-story window, and a woman who inhaled gas in the cellar. Neither fitted his case. The bedroom? That seemed the most likely place. He would don his pajamas, of course: and manifestly a *robe de nuit* belonged in a sleeping apartment. He retired to the bedroom and carefully began his preparations.

He selected a closet door near the window as his improvised gallows and, after making the rope fast, tied it about his neck and mounted a chair. It was hard to leave this life. It had its good side. He recalled the Sunday pinochle games with his particular cronies, in the rear room of Hofmeyer's saloon. It was almost time for the annual Schützenfest, too. Ah well, somebody else would have to lead that gallant band up Broadway and to the Harlem Casino. He wondered how many would turn out to his funeral, and whether Krafberger would play the trombone as poorly as he did the day Schmidt was buried. No matter. He would be in that country from out whose bourne no traveler returns.

"FUR the love ov Mike! Whatcher doin'? Ye bughouse Dutchman!"

Jonah paused in his last train of melancholy thought and stared at the window. In his abstraction he had forgotten to pull down the shade; and there, just across the airshaft, was a blonde-haired girl, bending far out of her own room, with eyes fixed on him in mingled amusement and disgust.

She caught his glance and grinned. "Quit that, ye boob, or I'll yell bloody murder, and it'll be yours fur the calaboose instead of the golden stair. D'ye get me?" He made no move to obey, and with a light spring she leaped to the sill and swung over to his window with a graceful abandon that even Jonah, seeped as he was in his own mournful reflections, could not but admire. It reminded him of Maria as she used to do it at the Turnverein, before she got so—so fat.

The intruder had slipped through the open window, and she faced him now,

breathing a trifle heavily from her exertion. "Come on, take that collar off. It don't become yer style of beauty." Mechanically Jonah obeyed. "Say, are ye clean gone dippy?" demanded the intruder. "Sit down and give us the first act of this tragedy. I'm curious. What's the plot? Business busted, or wife gone wrong?"

Jonah sank limply on the bed and drew a quilt over his stubby bare toes. "I'm a grub," he whined, "—only a grub."

"Mebbe ye need some," suggested the girl, watching him critically. "I can't get my cue on that line. Try it again."

Slowly, painfully, with several judicious promptings, Jonah laid bare the whole miserable story. When he had finished, his visitor laughed heartily. "And just for that ye was goin' t' do the Dutch, eh? Ye poor simp! Don't ye know a grub's first cousin to a butterfly, anyway? Crawl out ov yer shell, man. Crawl out ov yer shell. Show that dame wot's got ye fur a meal ticket that you haint got the supper time on this bill. Move up to the headliner's posish."

Jonah stared at her, his hands folded meekly in his lap. She seemed to realize that he did not understand, and proceeded to make herself plainer. "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll get back and put on my best evers; and they're some class, believe muh. You shake that suicide stuff, and git inter yer Sundays, and we'll beat it to sonte swell emporium. I'll put ye through, all right, all right, and we'll git return dates. Now remember, I'll be back in twenty minutes, and don't you keep the stage waiting."

It took Jonah some time fully to assimilate her meaning. Ordinarily, he would have laughed the idea to scorn, or put it from him in righteous indignation. But the coming of the fair unknown had brought about the inevitable reaction of mood and the pendulum of his emotions had swung to the other extreme. She was right. Why should he not be a butterfly too? His wife had spoken brazenly of a possible substitute for her lawful husband. Very well. If she was looking for that "other man," he would accept the "other woman."

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the airshaft presented herself at his door, she found Jonah ready—even to a silk hat so old that it was in style, and a cane, bequeathed to him by some distant relative in the old country.

She surveyed him with marked approbation. "Yer not so bad when ye git dolled up, and under the white lights any slip in yer make-up wont shine." She laid her gloved hand on his arm.

Jonah suddenly bethought himself. "I—I—don't even know your name."

She laughed. "Well, I aint got anything on you at that. I don't know yours. Call me Mazie. What'll I call you?"

"My name is Snefnacker."

Mazie gasped. "Good Lord, what a handle! Where did you git it? Yer mother must 'a' had a sure-enough grudge against ye to hitch up fur life to a name like that. Makes me think of limberger and suds. I'll call ye Jack. Come on, Jack."

THE events of the next five hours will always be little more than a cinematograph dream to Jonah Snefnacker. Afterward, he could only recall taxicabs, a dinner, with silver and cut glass predominating over the viands—none of which he recognized, except bread and butter. The crush of Forty-second Street and Broadway about eight p. m.; the garish lights; two theater tickets; singing, dancing, some stale jokes; more taxicabs; a brilliantly lighted room, filled with clatter, chatter, overdressed men and underdressed women; and a table, champagne, more champagne. Seasoning the whole chaotic mass, was the incessant voice of his companion, advising, rebuking, commending.

An orchestra, hidden somewhere behind papier-maché palms, struck up a bewildering syncopated measure. Women, wine-flushed, caught their partners unresistingly and began to gravitate up and down the aisles, in a series of bobs, jumps, slides and dips, that first amused, and then interested Jonah.

With marvelous percipience, Mazie waited for the psychological moment when her companion was unconsciously swaying to the catchy rhythm of music and dancers. Then she too sprang to her feet and took his arm. "Come on, Jack;

you've got to go the limit to-night. Yer bustin' that cocoon fast."

Jonah got to his feet, with the assistance of the table and Mazie's arm. He caught his partner awkwardly about the waist; and they too began to bob and dip among the other dancers. The incongruity of the spectacle amused the rest. Mazie was perfect in all the latest steps, and her supple body swayed in harmony with the music, with all the grace of long practice. Jonah had never danced anything beyond an occasional quadrille or lancers, and even those were of the dim distant past, when Mirabelle was plain Maria, and he only a young butcher's clerk. This matching of perfection with ignorance delighted the on-lookers.

Gradually the other dancers ceased, that they might watch these new performers. Like a true artist, Mazie quickly sensed the interest and redoubled her efforts, "We've got 'em goin', kiddo," she whispered to her partner—who, under the spell of wine and music, was doing his valiant best to keep his feet and hang onto the girl.

Suddenly as they swept down the aisle toward the front, a new party entered the restaurant. With the curiosity of the parvenu, the two women bent forward eagerly for a sight of this new sensation. Then there came a scream from the younger, while the elder stared, peered closer, then staggered backward, upsetting a table and spilling its choice collection of silver and glassware.

The crash caused a momentary cessation of activities on the part of Jonah and his partner. They paused almost in front of the newcomers. "*Mein Gott! Maria! Ach Himmel!*" In the awful shock of discovery, Jonah relapsed into his mother tongue and stared stupidly at the trio, his arm still clutched about Mazie's shapely bare shoulder.

Mrs. Snefnacker's indisposition was only momentary. She recovered herself quickly, and with recovery came action. Reaching for a heavy carafe on a near-by table, she hurled it at Jonah's head with the usual accurate aim for which women, particularly excited women, are famous. It went wide and crashed against an ornamental pillar.



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As she searched for another weapon, Mazie broke from her partner's terrified grasp. "I guess that's my cue for a quick exit. See ye later, kiddo. Oh, you butterfly!" She brushed hastily past, ducking under Azalia's arm as it shot out in an endeavor to get at the puffs of blonde hair that adorned her head. The next instant Mazie had disappeared into the darkness of the night.

A pitcher, poised for further assault, was rudely snatched from the irate wife's hand by a waiter; while two other attendants, with more force than suasion, propelled Mirabelle to and through the door. Her daughter and Mr. Weidmeyer quickly followed.

Azalia led her mother, still hysterical, to a taxicab in waiting, and imperiously beckoned the young man to follow.

"And—and—what about Mr. Snefnacker?" he asked.

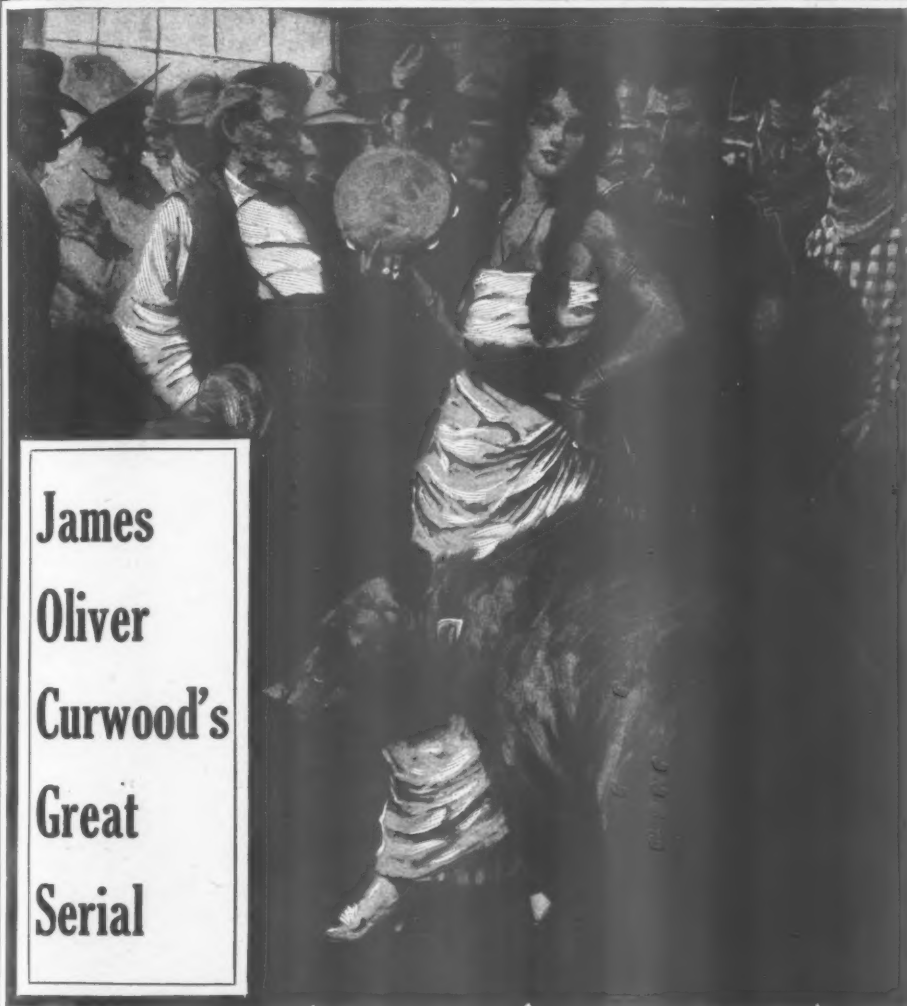
"Let him walk," advised the dutiful daughter. And Jonah did.

The stroll through the cool, deserted streets of the West Side gradually calmed the butcher's perturbation and gave his wife ample time to have her cry out before he reached the flat. The lights were low in the parlor when he softly entered the kitchen, but he heard a mumble of conversation as Azalia and her "young man" discussed the topics of the lovelorn. He glanced about, then tiptoed into the bedroom.

Maria sat on the side of the bed, rocking herself from side to side in silent grief. Without a word he slipped in and sat down beside her and took her hand. "I only wanted to show you that I wasn't a grub, Maria—ere—Mirabelly," he whispered. "And you know you said you were going out to look for another man."

She did not answer, and he timidly slid his arm about her ample waist and drew her to him. "I was going to kill myself first," he continued, with a nod toward the rope, still dangling from the closet door. "But that girl stopped me, and—"

Mrs. Snefnacker patted the hand that held her own. "Never mind, Popsy. Maybe being a grub haint so bad, after all. Let's forget it." And while in the parlor two young lovers billed and cooed, in the next room two older ones renewed their youth.



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EMPTY POCKETS—by Rupert Hughes

Continued from page 332 of this issue.

At length, in a drawer filled with an exquisite rubbish of ribbons and velvet patches, broken ornaments and souvenirs, she found two or three old dolls that she had kept by her since she had outgrown them.

One was a tall and haughty snob of wax, another an exquisite porcelain fairy, and a third was a burly cloth puppet of distinctly plebeian appearance—a kind of servant doll. There was a rip in its integument, whence the stuffing exuded.

This had once been her faithful, unfailing friend, the confidante of her most important secrets. "Suki," she called it.

She thrust the watch and the pearl and the ring in among the rags, sewed up the wound and felt enormously reassured.

In a rapture of relief she hugged the doll hard and whispered to it childishly: "Suki, you never told on me before. Remember I'm trusting you now with my life."

She put Suki back among the memories, and marveled at what time had wrought in her since she first began to lug that doll about the world.

III

THE need of some one to confide in grew imperious. The sight of her old dolls had rendered her back to childhood, and she felt a loneliness for her father and mother.

They had always protected her from every evil and reasoned away every bogie. She was tempted to go out to the country place at once, but she was afraid to start to run, lest her wits should be stampeded, and lest people might wonder why she had vanished.

Late in the afternoon her father telephoned that he was in town with her mother, who had some shopping to do. They were going back on the yacht at six. She must meet them at the slip.

In the cool of the afternoon she rode down Fifth Avenue through the home-going flood-tide of people. Everybody was reading the evening papers. The crowded tops of the stages fluttered with journals. Even the occupants of stately motors, who did not think it looked correct to read as they rode, could not postpone their greedy interest in the Merithew affair.

Muriel was tormented with curiosity to read what was said. For all she knew, her name was in the headlines. When the car was checked for a time by the cross-current of traffic at Forty-second Street, she had the chauffeur buy her several papers from a newsboy.

It was a strange experience, to be the only one who knew what all these millions were trying to learn, what all these reporters were guessing at.

The minor headlines told her that the police were baffled, and that gave her some comfort. But when she read that a certain Aphra Shaler was suspected and had taken flight, and that "Red Ida" Ganley was being sought by the police, she found a new problem before her. The question was no longer one of saving merely herself: she must save other women, innocent women, whom her act had dragged from their rightful obscurity into a grewsome notoriety, perhaps into a hazard of life.

She had not meant to harm Perry Merithew, and she had a right to evade the awful results of the accident. But had she the right to let them fall on somebody else? If only she could quit thinking long enough to rest, so that she might think right!

The crowded Avenue was a gantlet of terrors for her, and again that mutiny grew within herself, that rebel faction demanding that she rise and cry out to the multitude, as she had seen suffragettes stand up in their motor cars and harangue the throngs. Only, Muriel's oration would be:

"Here I am! Look no further! Quit



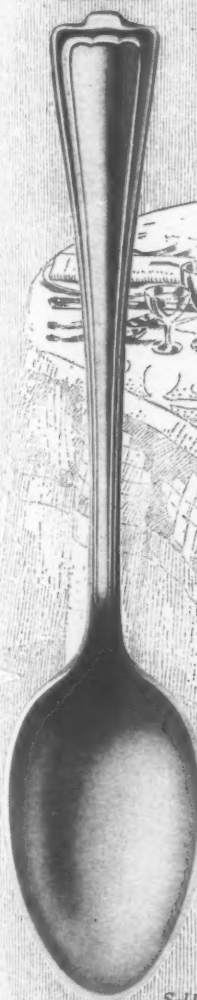
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accusing innocent women. I am the guilty one. I killed Perry Merithew!"

But of course she did no such thing. She sat and read her paper, and the people she passed, if they noticed her at all, thought how pretty and peaceable she was. And many a woman wished that she might change places with her.

She found her father and mother on the shade-deck of the yacht, trying to read the breeze-whipped papers. And the first words they said were in unison:

"Did you hear about poor Perry Merithew?"

Muriel nodded distressfully, and Susan exclaimed:

"But poor Mrs. Merithew! How terrible for her!"

"I was with her when she got the news," said Muriel.

"Oh, my dear! you poor child! How horrible! How did she take it? Did she know any more about it than the papers do?"

Muriel shook her head and spoke with a trifle of impatience:

"If you please, I'd rather not talk about it. I can't stand any more."

Jacob and Susan were gushing with sympathy and motioned to each other to drop the subject, but it kept coming up. They could not keep their eyes off their papers, and at length they buried themselves in the news. The yacht backed out and pushed up the river, and by and by Muriel took a paper to read.

It was comfortable to be at home with her own kin, and it was encouraging to see the vast and perilous city shrinking back into the distance. Muriel was tempted anew to tell her father and mother. But she felt that she owed them a great duty. They had sheltered her as best they could from the cruelties of life: she must shelter them now. She had no right to blast their years. The public had no right to demand them as a living human sacrifice on the altar of curiosity.

But she could not let them know what she was doing for them. They never dreamed how she was repaying her debts now, how they tried her self-control with their comments.

"Something like this has been coming to Perry for a long while," said Jacob. "He was a wrong un from the start."

And Susan, looking over her spectacles and her paper, moralized:

"It all comes from being promiscuous. I always said that the slums were dangerous. Perhaps you'll believe me now, Muriel. I hope this will be a lesson to you."

"Yes, Mother," said Muriel.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

WHEN the total number of persons convicted of murder every year is subtracted from the total number of persons murdered every year, the remainder is appalling. The Merithew affair was drifting into the remainder.

The police themselves were less determined to solve the problem than the *Gazette* reporter, Hallard. He felt that this was his own private crime. He had written the first extra, and he was determined to write the last extra.

The Merithew case became his obsession. He never went anywhere that he did not keep one eye open for a possible agent.

His first effort was to find the owner of the hatpin he had found on the roof. He took it to a number of jewelers and to various dealers in notions. None of them could help him except negatively. He could not learn who had manufactured it, though he made himself a nuisance among the goldsmiths that keep a guild in Maiden Lane.

He was afraid to withhold the pin for more than a day or two. He had neither fear nor respect for the police, but his city editor, Ulery, grew uneasy. He questioned if even the freedom of the press, which overrides the freedom of everybody else, implied the right to steal an important clue and keep it as private property.

Besides, the publication of its discovery might bring it to the notice of the merchant who sold it. And he might remember who bought it. Many crimes had been run to earth in just this way, and the *Gazette* could claim the entire credit.

Before Hallard relinquished the hatpin to the police, he gave it to the "art department" of the *Gazette*, and a huge



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portrait of the pin was published on the front page, with enlarged views of the amethyst head and the claw that gripped it.

Other papers followed suit at once, and the pin at last reached the eyes of the little up-town shopkeeper who had made it up himself from an amethyst out of a bracelet and a claw on an old watch-fob.

The portrait of Merithew that accompanied the portrait of the pin in the newspapers reminded him of the stranger who had bought it. He began also to recall the features of the pretty girl who had often paused to gaze in at his window.

Greatly excited, he made haste to thumb over the pages of his daybooks. He had to go back almost a year before he found the entry of the sale.

About this time, also, the slow-witted janitor of the apartment house where Perry had nested Maryla for a while woke up to the resemblance of the dead man's pictures to the face of the "Mr. Brown" who had leased an apartment and paid for it longer than he kept it. His wife remembered that "Mrs. Brown" had disappeared abruptly, leaving all her clothes, and that "Mr. Brown" had paid the colored maid a month's wages in lieu of notice. The maid had reveled in her leisure for a time and later taken service with another tenant.

Mrs. Janitor found a portrait of Mrs. Merithew in one of the papers, and her unlikeness to "Mrs. Brown" was complete. The janitor decided that they had better suppress the incident for the good name of the house, but the janitrix would talk, and one of the tenants sold his gossip to the *Gazette*.

Before long Hallard was on the ground. He talked with the colored maid, Martha. He learned that Mrs. Brown's first name was "Maryla" and that a strange man had called upon her the last day of her presence there, and had left a bag full of ribbons and pretty clothes. Martha had found them on the floor the next morning. "Mr. Brown" had told her she could keep them.

Hallard chuckled now. New doors were opening for him everywhere. He had but to find this Maryla, and he could

make the police look foolish, for they were still in search of the fugitive Red Ida and the well-concealed Aphra Shaler.

It took a vast amount of questioning and false-clue-following, but Hallard was indefatigable. He ran among the multitudinous trails of New York like a fanatic beagle, red-eyed and bristling; but he was not giving tongue.

Before long he burst into Dutilh's shop and caused a panic among the birds of paradise. Dutilh was in Europe buying clothes, and Mrs. Shenstone was difficult, but at length Hallard browbeat her into giving him Maryla's latest address, as well as her earlier ones.

She had not been seen in the shop for three days. Hallard's half-eyebrow drew down over one sly eye as he realized that the picture of the hatpin had been published three days before.

When he arrived panting at the boarding house where Maryla had last resided, according to the Dutilh address-book, he learned that she had paid her bill and left there, carrying all her property in a suit-case and a bundle, on the very day before Perry Merithew was found on the roof.

And there the trail ended. Hallard stood sniffing the air and whining like a beagle that has followed a warm trail to the border of a stream in a swamp.

All the clew he had now was a mental portrait of Maryla gathered from the more or less contradictory descriptions he had wheedled out of the Dutilhettes. So far as he could find, no photograph of her existed.

He made a trip to Allen Street and invaded the home of the Sokalski's with pretenses of news to Maryla's advantage. But all he learned was that, so far as they knew, the girl had never given her image to a camera.

That was a matter of small difficulty to a newspaper. Hallard told the art editor about Maryla and her Polish blood, and the editor dug out the familiar alleged portrait of the Countess Potocka and had it somewhat doctored with more recent clothes and coiffure. It did not represent Maryla at all, but neither did it represent the Countess Potocka.

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CHAPTER XXXIX

AFTER Worthing left Muriel he suddenly remembered her little gesture of repulsion when the maid offered to take down her hair. It would have meant nothing under other circumstances, and he would not let it mean anything now. He would not disgrace his brain by thinking of such rubbish.

But a little later, he was thinking of it again. The papers were clamorous with the puzzle of the copper-haired woman. Muriel's hair might be called copper colored. She knew Merithew. She knew that building in Allen Street. Worthing himself had gone there with her. Why might not Merithew have gone there? It was disloyal to admit the possibility, yet he could not unthink his thoughts. Why had she hidden her hair under that lace cap? Wasn't that a new way she had of doing up her hair?

The questions nagged him like gnats returning as fast as they were struck away. But his love of her kept pace with his suspicions.

Perhaps Merithew had not been killed at all. The papers said so. But who believed the papers? The papers said the surgeons said so. But it takes a surgeon to know what mistakes surgeons make.

Suddenly Worthing felt a curiosity to see for himself. Having been on the ambulance at Bellevue, he had made the acquaintance of many hospital authorities, of police surgeons, and of the coroner. It was not hard for him to get access to the body itself. He resolved to talk at once with the man who had made the first examination on the teneament roof. He would call on him casually, and question him. If he could not find out something to acquit Muriel of his suspicions, he might at least gain some knowledge to protect her with if she were guilty.

The word *guilty* shocked him like a sacrilege. Whatever she had done, it was no fit word for her.

BY a little adroit telephoning he found out the name of the hospital that sent the ambulance to Allen Street, and the name of the interne in charge of it.

He had known young Doctor Arnold at Johns Hopkins. He dropped in on him and asked him for the address of an old crony of theirs. After a little idle gossip he made to leave, then turned back to say casually:

"Did you read about this Merithew case?"

"Did I?" Arnold laughed. "I wrote it. I was the first surgeon on the roof."

"Is that so?" said Worthing. "I didn't see your name in the papers. Did they get it right?"

"Did they ever? No!"

"Where were they wrong?"

"Everywhere. In the description of the position of the body, the condition, the wounds. Every paper gave a different story, and every one was wrong. For instance, they all spoke of the pools of blood. There was really very little, surprisingly little."

"Is that so? Could I have a look at him, do you suppose?"

"Sure. He's in an undertaker shop, waiting for the family to claim him after the coroner gets through."

It was a cold-blooded business with these men, but Worthing's heart was hot enough when he entered the dingy shop in whose back room Perry Merithew was ironically installed. The fat and amiable undertaker motioned Worthing in and left him alone.

Worthing had seen Perry last in the sunlit ocean. He had regarded him with angry jealousy. Now his rival seemed helpless enough; as far as possible from being handsome, or rich, or merry. But was he clinging still to Muriel? Was there no way to extract the secrets from those lips congealed together? Merry Perry would answer no questions vocally, but Worthing cross-examined him in his own way.

Then he went direct to the coroner, and asked his opinion with more deference than he felt for the office.

"It's pretty clear," said the coroner, "that he died of a fracture of the skull from a blow with a blunt instrument."

"I don't think so," said Worthing.

"You don't, don't you? And why not?"

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If he had been killed by a blow, there would have been a very great effusion of blood. As a matter of fact, there was very little. Wouldn't that indicate that his heart had stopped before he was struck? I opened his eyelids; the pupil of the right eye was dilated. Wouldn't that suggest an internal hemorrhage of the brain?"

"Don't ask me. Tell me."

"I'm telling you."

"What in thunder do you think did kill him?"

"Apoplexy. I believe that an examination will show little clots in the basal ganglia in the region of the floor of the fourth ventricle."

"What could have brought it on?"

"Some big shock. Some overwhelming emotion. I believe it was a stroke of the type called *foudroyant*."

"What was he doing on that roof?"

"That's more than I know. It must have taken some terrific crisis to get him there."

"Apoplexy, eh. You're the family physician?"

"Not exactly the regular man, but I was called in to take care of poor Mrs. Merithew."

"Do you know that Merithew had any apoplectic history?"

"No, but you know what his life has been. He looked pretty seedy when I saw him yesterday."

"You saw him yesterday—where?"

"At Long Beach. He was dancing with a girl in a bathing suit."

"He would be. Who was she?"

"I don't know her name. Her face was familiar, though."

"The late extras mention his affair with Aphra Shaler."

"That's who it was. I remember her now perfectly."

"She's skipped the bailiwick, scooted to New Jersey. The police are after her."

"She never killed him."

"How do you know?"

"She had light blonde hair. I noticed it on the beach."

"Did you see him with any other girl—any copper-haired beauty?"

"No."

Worthing said it calmly. Physicians

have to learn to lie with deftness. But he began to shudder with a new dread. He just remembered that Perry Merithew had been on the float when Muriel asked Worthing to call for her that evening. Merithew had overheard the invitation. After Worthing said how sorry he was that he had another engagement and swam away, perhaps she invited Merithew to call.

The plausibility of this hurt Worthing excruciatingly. It helped to confirm the suspicion. Perhaps some one else on the crowded float heard them make an engagement, and would come forward to testify.

The one service he could render Muriel was to attack the theory of murder. He said to the coroner:

"Look here, old man. A lot of people are in favor of abolishing your office altogether. They say it's a useless waste of time and money. You've got a chance to make a ten-strike. Before you send Merithew back to his family, you have his brain and heart removed, and send them to an expert. Nobody needs to know if the autopsy proves what the papers say. But if it proves that Merithew died of a stroke instead of a weapon, you can turn a neat trick on the detectives and the reporters."

The idea interested the much-maligned official, and he agreed to act upon it. Worthing lingered till he heard the instructions telephoned to an eminent specialist.

Then he went back uptown to the Schuyler house, to see his patient and to question her. He learned that she had gone to the country. He called at the Merithew home to inquire of the widow's condition. He learned that the regular family physician had taken control.

Worthing dawdled away, listless and useless. Nobody seemed to need him. He had nearly had two patients, and now he had none.

CHAPTER XL

THE Schuyler country place contained in itself nearly every resource for diversion: it was a palace in the midst of a farm on the edge of the water.

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There were wildernesses and shorn lawns, solitude and the telephone. There were swimming, yachting, canoeing, tennis, polo, horses, cattle, gardening, books, dances, cards, motoring, motor boating—not far away there was even an aviation field.

Muriel tried all the diversions, but they only wearied her. She could get no lilt into her athleticism, no sincerity into her conversation, no opportunity for her charity or her hilarity. Those fleet impulses of hers were now few and desperate, and they must be repressed.

She was afraid to be so far from the city. She wanted to go back to the roof and see if she had not left some clue there that she might snatch up before the police found it. She wanted to be where she could buy every extra edition while it was still damp from the press, so that she could keep watch on the detectives.

Yet when she was recalled to the city she was afraid to be near.

The recall came in the most uncanny way. She was alone on a dark piazza; the moon shining through a haze made everything grewsome. A servant's voice spoke suddenly out of the dark:

"You are wanted on the telephone, please."

"Who is it?"

"Mr. Perry Merithew."

It was like a grisly summons, and she was assailed with an ague of fright. She answered:

"I thought that Mr. Merithew was d-dead."

"Oh, yes, Miss. This is the young Mr. Merithew."

She smiled ironically, remembering: the King is dead, long live the King. She dragged herself to the telephone and heard the youthful mimicry of the father's voice:

"Is that you, Miss Muriel? Hope I haven't torn you away from cards or something pleasant. Fact is, to-morrow is the funeral of my poor old dad. The little mother's awfully cut up, of course. She's taken no end of a shine to you. She wondered if you would be angel enough to come and help her through. It's a lot to ask. But you've been so good to the other poor people, maybe you

would take pity on her. Do you think you could?"

"Of course. Of course!"

"That's—that's wonderful of you. God b-bless you, Miss Muriel."

He was crying. That set her to crying. He was the boy trying to walk like a man, and his load was too big and too sudden. And Muriel was a girl too abruptly flung into womanhood.

II

THE funeral celebration was a mingling of profound grief and outrageous sensationalism. Crowds fought their way into the church and mobbed the police outside till it was hard for them to open a lane wide enough to let the family through, and the coffin.

Perry Merithew went down the aisle under a great blanket of violets, to music that throbbed enormously in the air. His widow and his son and the nearest relatives followed in densest black, like paupers. They did not know that Perry's heart and brain were not in the casket with the rest of him.

Muriel walked with the family and wore black with them. The almost unendurable solemnity and mystery of the ritual and the music overwhelmed her, but she seemed to be like some new and well-built ship that weathers every storm that sea and sky and wind and lightning can wreak upon it—that plunges to every trough but somehow climbs out to every crest, that makes the worst of every blast, but emerges, always.

That was what Mrs. Merithew tried to tell Muriel in the black hours after Perry had been submitted to the earth.

"You have youth, and hope and beauty and the future. Nothing matters for you. But it's all over for me. I'm an old woman with a fatherless boy to watch, and a scandal that I'll never live down. I have no ambition left and only one prayer—to find the woman that killed Perry and send her after him in worse disgrace. If God will grant me that, I won't ask anything else except forgiveness for poor Perry."

Something impelled Muriel to say:

"Do you think you ought to mix prayers for revenge with prayers for for-

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Sworn to and subscribed before me this 30th day of March, 1915

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givenness? Don't you think revenge is out of date? Don't you think you ought to leave the woman to the law?"

"I'll leave her to the law, never fear!" Mrs. Merithew muttered. "If I can find her! And I think I have her name."

Muriel was too startled to gasp. She simply looked the question that Mrs. Merithew answered:

"Pet Bettany."

Muriel almost laughed at the surprising fatuity of this.

"How on earth did you come to think of her?"

"In going over some old check-books of my husband's, the detectives found two or three he had made to her."

"Oh, Pet was always in trouble. She borrowed from everybody, right and left, and never paid. I'll bet her mother got a few checks, too."

"One or two."

"Then you can't accuse Pet."

"No? What about this letter? She sent it to him at his club; he never got it—it was turned over to us." She thrust into Muriel's hand this note:

Perry Darling:

I was a beast to treat you so outrageously. But you know that wolf-temper of mine. I'm not really to blame. I inherited it with my other faults. When I'm jealous, I simply go blind with rage, and don't know what I'm saying.

You were an old dear to me, and I'll promise to behave if you'll take me out again. Please telephone. I'll wait at home till I hear from you.

PET.

"What have you to say to that?" Mrs. Merithew demanded.

"Only what you said; that he never got it," Muriel ventured.

"But she could have reached him by telephone, no doubt, at another club."

"Anyway, she hasn't copper-colored hair," Muriel urged, in a panic, wondering how she could save Pet without impugning herself.

"She dyed her hair auburn not long ago," Mrs. Merithew persisted.

"But she would never have gone into the slums with him. Why should she? She had no motive. Besides, she wouldn't have taken his money, his watch, his pearl."

"That may have only been a blind to throw suspicion off the track."

"Oh, in heaven's name, don't accuse her till you are sure," Muriel pleaded. "It would be a frightful thing. You'd never forgive yourself. Don't give your heart up to revenge. Turn your thoughts to mercy, for your poor husband's sake, and your own. If Pet had done this thing, her hair would show it. Make sure that it does before you turn her over to the police and the newspapers."

Muriel was so overwrought that Mrs. Merithew promised to take no action until she had corroboration for her theory. But she kept the letter.

Seeing how exhausted Muriel was, she forbade her to stay longer and sent her to her own home. Muriel's first caller there was Pet Bettany.

III

PET had repented her quarrel with Merithew with a morning-after misery. She had wakened that day with more than a headache. She had looked about the house where she and her mother were beleaguered.

Poverty was round them like a moat, and the city was in the hands of the enemy, the army of creditors. There was merry-making in the town and beyond its walls.

Perry had given her safe-conduct and escort through the lines. He was her only friend, and she had insulted him with imbecile lack of tact. It was bad business. She sent a note to his club and waited at home for him to summon her by telephone.

Perry had not called for her that night. She had spent the long, lone evening in the dark fuming against him.

Her mother had gone out that evening with an old beau she had tried to refurbish. The old beau had taken Mrs. T. J. B. to dinner and to a theater and a roof-dance afterward. The prodigal mother had come home at a late hour.

Pet bitterly resented Perry's absence till she read his perfect excuse in the next afternoon's headlines.

She had thought: "If he had called on me as I asked him to, he would be alive now."



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She told her mother about it. Her mother was immediately upset.

"Good Lord, dear, suppose they accused you. How would you prove you weren't with him? The servants had gone to bed, and I was out. What proof have you? Why, even I don't know that you were here. Were you here?"

Pet saw in her mother's eyes a look that appalled her.

"My God!" she cried, "you don't suspect me?"

"Of course not, my child, and yet it is queer, isn't it? Suppose they asked me where you were. I couldn't swear you were home, could I? They could prove that I was away myself, couldn't they?"

There was a kind of perfunctory loyalty in her mother's tone that terrified Pet. If her own mother could think her capable of such a crime, what would other people think?

She knew that her reputation was not beyond cavil. She knew that she had enemies: she had been proud of them, their number and importance. They had given zest to life.

Now she realized that enemies are liabilities and friends are assets.

Pet delivered a tirade against her mother that convinced Mrs. T. J. B. of one thing particularly—that her daughter had an ungovernable temper. Mrs. T. J. B. made the most astonishing comment:

"Pet, my dear, you've really got to learn to control yourself. You look as if you could kill me too."

"Too?" Pet gasped. "Too? Then you do believe."

"I believe nothing," screamed Mrs. T. J. B., "except that we've got to raise some money somewhere."

"You'd better telephone your new old beau."

"They discontinued the telephone this morning."

This was serious. The enemy had cut the cables. Pet thought and thought. If only Perry were alive! She had been nursing him along. The thought of Perry brought up the thought of Muriel Schuyler.

The name flashed up in her gloom with the sudden brilliance of a lettered electric sign. Pet had not frightened

Perry into paying over, but perhaps Muriel would be easier. She had had mysterious dealings with Perry, and people who had had mysterious dealings with Perry were doing their best to keep them dark just now.

Also, Muriel had copper-colored hair. What a pistol that was to hold at her head! Pet would pretend to believe her guilty, and threaten to tell the police of her transactions with Perry. Muriel would naturally come down handsomely to suppress even a whisper.

And then, Pet quivered under the shock of an appalling notion. Perhaps Muriel was the guilty woman. Why not? The mere thought was so impossible that there might be something in it. Pet's cynical soul reached the truth as geniuses and maniacs sometimes reach it: by arguing with false logic from false premises.

Pet went out and telephoned to Muriel at the town house but learned that she was in the country. Pet could not afford the trip. Later she went to the funeral. That was free. She saw Muriel there. The fact that she was with Mrs. Merithew quickened the suspicions of Pet.

She went to the Schuyler home and waited. She waited for hours before Muriel came in and greeted her with amazement.

The two had never been friends, though they had been acquaintances almost from cradle-days. It puzzled Muriel to think that she had just been defending Pet and now found her at her own home.

"Hello, Pet," she said with difficult cordiality. "Sorry to have kept you waiting."

"Hello, Muriel. It doesn't matter."

"Sit down, do."

"Thanks. I'll keep you only a moment." There was a silence. Pet was looking at Muriel's hair. Muriel caught the glance. It put her instantly on her guard. Her heart began to hammer with alarm. At length Pet began to speak.

"Terrible thing about poor Perry, wasn't it?"

"Terrible."

"Especially sad for you. You knew him so well."

"Did I?" said Muriel.



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"Didn't you? I used to see you dancing with him."

"Only once, I think—at the Yacht Club."

"I saw him give you money then."

"You did?" Muriel laughed. Here was a chance to say a word in Perry's favor. "Oh, that! Did you see that? It was funny. I had asked my father for some money for a little Italian boy who was kidnaped."

"Did he live in Allen Street?" Pet leaped at the question so eagerly that Muriel understood her a little more.

She answered calmly:

"No. He lived in Batavia Street, 'way down near the Brooklyn Bridge. My father wouldn't give me the money to ransom him. Mr. Merithew was at the office. He said he'd give it to me if he could borrow it. He telephoned over that he'd give it to me if I paid for it with a dance. So I did. It was foolish of me, but his money saved the boy, and it's saving other people still. Father was furious when I told him."

Pet stuck to the point: "Once you got him interested in charity, you got him to go to the slums with you, I suppose, or didn't you?"

"Never," Muriel answered. It is easy to lie when a direct question is put. Pet returned to the attack from another direction.

"When you were kidnaped, Perry saved you, didn't he?"

"Yes," said Muriel. It was pleasant to tell the truth.

"You kept it out of the papers."

"Naturally. I don't like being in the papers."

"How did it happen that Perry happened to be the man?"

"You know that as well as I do. You were with him when the word came. Winnie Nicolls was with you. He told me you knew all about it. Winnie tried to rescue me, too, and so did Dr. Worthing. Mr. Merithew happened to succeed."

"But why were you so anxious to keep out of sight? Why did you leave for Europe right away? Why did Perry follow you over? Why was he always so eloquent in your praise?"

"Why are you asking me all these

curious questions about the poor fellow?"

The pity in Muriel's eyes at the mention of his name did more to persuade Pet of Muriel's innocence than any open plea could have done. It was another of the instances where womanly intuition leaps to the wrong conclusion. Muriel repeated her question coldly:

"Why are you asking me all these questions?"

"Oh, I was just curious," Pet mumbled, disconcerted.

Muriel's heart hardened. "Are you trying to solve the mystery?"

"In a way."

"And you came here to convince yourself that I was guilty of such a hideous crime?"

The sincerity of Muriel's horror again undermined Pet's assurance. Her evident confusion emboldened Muriel. She laughed harshly:

"Do you think that I killed the poor man?"

"Oh, no, no, of course not."

"Oh, yes, of course so," Muriel mocked her. Then she spoke without mercy. "Miss Bettany, you might be in better business than this. If you start to throwing suspicion around, some of it might fall on yourself."

"On me!" Pet laughed.

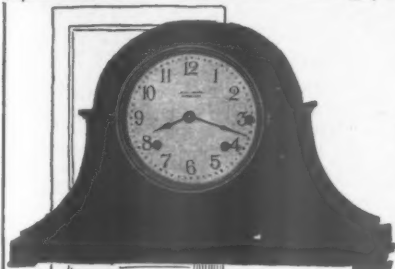
Muriel pushed the charge: "Mr. Merithew was killed in the heart of the slums. The police say he was robbed. They are looking for the thief among the thieves. If you begin to hint that some one in his own set took him down there and killed him, you may set the police on your own track."

"How dare you!" Pet stormed. "As if I couldn't prove that I wasn't with him!"

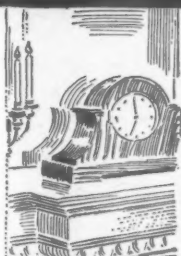
"But can you?" Muriel ventured. She took a wild chance, and she saw that it scored. She went after Pet like a boxer who has landed a lucky blow.

"You may not know that the letter you wrote Mr. Merithew fell into his wife's hands. It speaks of your blind temper. Mrs. Merithew showed me that note this afternoon. The poor woman wanted to have you arrested. I used my influence to quiet her. I told her that whatever else you were capable of, you couldn't commit murder. She referred to the fact

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that you had recently painted your hair to a rich copper color."

Pet could not endure the sublime injustice of this.

"My hair?" she shrieked. "My hair is my alibi! Do you want to see it?" She was taking off her hat.

Muriel checked her: "Don't insult me by thinking I'm as idiotically suspicious as you are. I don't believe for one minute that you are guilty. I only say that you'd better not begin to juggle heavy weights, for fear you might drop one on your own toe. You mustn't forget that only a night or two before Mr. Merithew's death you were seen with him in a restaurant. You quarreled with him outrageously. It was very uncomfortable for the rest of us. The waiters were in ecstasies, and the head waiter was in despair. Mr. Nicolls and his aunt and my father were there with me."

Pet's desperation rekindled her anger. "I offered to show you my hair to prove that none of it was cut off. Will you show me yours?"

Muriel stared at her with disdain.

"Certainly not. Of all the astounding impertinences I ever heard of! If you've got a police badge, I will. Or if you'll bring a policeman, I'll show him. But at the same time I'll have to mention the note to poor Mr. Merithew and the ferocious quarrel and your little effort to throw suspicion on me. Perhaps the hair wasn't your own. What if it were a transformation? Many women do wear transformations. Perhaps the woman that killed him had one on. Perhaps the hair they found in his hands was false."

If Pet had never before had the feeling of murder in her heart, she felt it now. She could have flown at Muriel and torn her face to shreds. But Muriel was an athlete of well-known prowess, and Muriel was calm and ready for her.

The most disgusting thing about Pet's cyclones of rage was that they usually ended in rain. She was now so helpless that she broke down and wept. Muriel completed her victory before she yielded to mercy:

"You were speaking about the money you saw Mr. Merithew give me. What about the money he gave you? Mrs. Merithew has the checks."

Pet wanted to roll off the chair to the floor under this final shame. But Muriel was saying:

"Everybody knows that you and your mother have been awfully hard up, and people have said you have been living by your wits. It just occurs to me that your real reason for coming to see me was to scare me into paying you something, now that poor Mr. Merithew is out of your reach? Is that true?" Muriel could have flashes of genius too.

Pet wailed like a banshee at this, but it convinced Muriel. She felt a deep sorrow for her. She had heard much of the poverty of the once-rich. She put her hand on Pet's shoulder. Pet shook it off with a snarl, but Muriel was not to be thwarted:

"Listen, my dear," she said. "You couldn't have had any other reason. You must have been terribly hard pressed to think of it. You must need money awfully. I'm going to give you some. Will you take it?"

"No, no, no, no!" Pet howled.

"I'm going to give it to you anyway," Muriel pleaded. "My father gave me a hundred dollars to get some flowers for poor Mr. Merithew's funeral. I telephoned for them and had them charged. I've got the cash here. You take it, wont you? Please! He would have liked you to have it. There might be more if you need it."

Pet shook her head frantically, but Muriel took money from her own hand-bag and transferred it to Pet's. Pet hardly knew it.

PET was thinking bitter thoughts in the hiding of her shut eyes, but the talisman of that hundred dollars was irresistible. Her pride had died long ago. She had taken money on far less honorable terms. Muriel was rich. And Muriel made it easy by pretending to let her pretend that she did not know it was there. So she refused again to accept it, but did not open her hand-bag and eject it.

When she opened her bloodshot, tear-stained eyes, she was like a wildcat that has fought in vain against the gentleness of a trapper who feeds it and lets it go.

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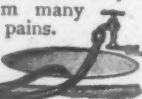
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Her escape was conveniently facilitated by the arrival of a purblind servant who announced:

"Miss Sokalska."

Muriel nodded. Pet mopped her eyes desperately with a dripping handkerchief. Muriel handed her a dry one, and said:

"Wont you stay and meet her?"

Which was equivalent to saying: "Of course you wont." Pet shook her head and hurried out as Maryla came in.

Pet had forgotten to say "Thank you," but that is not expected of untamed animals given their liberty.

CHAPTER XLI

MURIEL'S victory over Pet Bettany was so vital to her that she hardly noticed Maryla till Pet was gone. She was ready to sink down with battle-fatigue, but the sight of Maryla revived her.

For Maryla carried her baby in her arms. There was a beatitude in Maryla's eyes now, and pride in place of shame in her carriage. And the baby at her breast was chortling "Home, Sweet Home" in the original version.

Muriel rushed to Maryla with a cry of delight and robbed her of the child. With the fine discrimination of infants, this baby who owed the recovery of its mother to Muriel decided that Muriel was something dangerous. It was frantically afraid of her and tried to wriggle from her grasp, emitting yelps of fear and flinging its hands out for rescue. Muriel had a superstitious feeling that the baby was mystically aware of her crime.

Maryla took back her own. She tried to comfort Muriel.

"She cried when foist I took her off the noise she had by Foundlings."

"When did you go there for her?"

"That same night you gave me such of a talking. And it was a good business for me."

"Why?"

"Because I am there that night Meesteh Merithew is died."

Muriel was startled.

"What difference did that make to you?"

And now she learned what she had never guessed before. The infant had fallen asleep on its mother's bosom. Maryla, asking permission with a look, laid it down on a big divan and turned back to Muriel.

"Meesteh Merithew is the fadder of this bebbey."

Muriel could not understand her till she had repeated it:

"Yes. I did not told you because you are friends by him like you are by me and everybody. But it is so. He is the fadder. He was the fadder."

Muriel gripped the arms of her chair lest the swirl of it cast her to the floor. Maryla talked on:

"If the policers should find me, I can make a proving that I am not on the roof that night."

"Why should the police look for you?"

"Oh, they will: they do now. Didn't you see the picture of the hetpin they print it in the papers?"

"I saw that," Muriel said. "But I never knew whose it was—it wasn't yours?"

"Sure! It was the hetpin I showed you that time I am here for tea. I was telling you I wanted to stick it in the heart of that fadder."

"But you—you didn't kill him."

"No," Maryla laughed. "I wanted it, but I could not found him. It is why I come to see you now. That pin in the papers is the pin I leaved here that day."

"You left it here!"

"Sure. I hand it to you. You put it on table. I go away in a hurry. Outside, I find I have no hetpin. I am afraid that big man you have for your doorkeeper. I go on by Foundlings."

"You left the pin here?" Muriel pondered. "But I left it on the table. I never saw it again."

"No, not you." Maryla lowered her voice. "It is why I am here. Somebody in this house did take that pin maybe. That Merithew is bad man by young goils. I am thinking some soivant goil there is in your house, and he makes love by her like by me. And she kills him maybe. So I come to tell you to tell her to look out."

"If policers arrest me, I must tell it

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is not me. For I cannot die now for somebody else. I have my bebbly. But I don't want nobody else to die for that bad man. It is enough that he dies like he should ought to have died before he makes so bad by so many young goils without making more yet."

Muriel began to understand. She remembered that when Perry Merithew invited her to take the 'bus-ride with him she had put her hat on in the dark. She had caught up two hatpins from her dressing table. There on the roof he had taken them out when he lifted her hat from her hair. Afterwards she had tried to reach one of them in vain. When she saw the hatpin pictured in the newspapers it had meant nothing to her but a blind clue. Now she was convinced that it was Maryla's hatpin that she had worn. And Maryla had come to tell her. And Maryla was—Muriel had killed the father of Maryla's child!

Muriel could not carry everything. She collapsed in her chair with a groan of surrender, and began to weep.

Maryla, overjoyed at being able to help her from whom she had had so much help, gathered her into her arms to comfort her. But Muriel pushed her away.

"You mustn't touch me. Not you. But I didn't mean to harm you when I—when I—I didn't know that he was the man. I didn't know. You didn't tell me."

She could not say it. She did not need to. Maryla understood. The blow felled her to her knees. She clung to the arm of Muriel's chair and whispered questions that Muriel answered. Now it was not Maryla who groveled and Muriel who comforted, but *vice versa*.

Muriel told her the whole story. For all the shame, it was glorious to tell it, even to this girl, especially to this victim of her act.

THERE is no greater happiness granted mankind than the first free moment of relief. Muriel wept, but the tears were refreshing as rain.

The problems of the future were unchanged—increased, perhaps, because she had exposed her guilt. But she could draw a few deep breaths, at least.

The fact that Muriel had entered the house in Maryla's behalf, in the hope of pleading with her father to take her back, was the final proof of Muriel's angelhood. Maryla promised to save her at any cost. She resolved to save her if she had to sacrifice herself for her. She begged Muriel to feel safe.

"They will not catch me," she said, "but should they catch me, I got my proof. I was by Foundlings that night—and my bebbly sleepink in my arm. And such a sleepink it was for me! the foist in how long I don't know. But only for you, I should not have my bebbly now."

"Should those policers catch me, don't you say nothink. I wont say nothink, till it comes by courthouse. Then I laugh and I say, 'Go esk Sister Superiors where I am that night.' Then those old judges look like a fool and they gotta let me go. If they dont let me go, then you shall take care of my bebbly, yes! It should be right, too, for I wanted to kill that man and I did not. You did not want, but you did. If somebody's got a right to get a ponishment, it is not you now!"

Muriel protested that the scheme was impossible, intolerable. But Maryla only laughed. She gathered her baby in her arms, and went out smiling.

Again Muriel went to the door with her. Maryla's last words were:

"Don't you be afraid of nobody. All comes right. You trost me. All comes right."

CHAPTER XLII

MURIEL dined alone that evening in the big dining-room. She ravened after her food, for her strength had been drained in a dozen labors, and she had told somebody her secret.

She had no intention of letting Maryla bear her penalty. But she had gained a confidante and a promiser of help. That was much.

When she went to her room, however, and the long evening stretched before her and lost itself in an endless road of long evenings, sorrow resumed its possession of her. And she could not get used to sorrow. She could see noth-

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ing in her past that was pleasant, and nothing in her future but guilt and solitude.

She heard the doorbell ring faintly. The police had arrived at last. She locked the door as silently as she could. She waited a long, long while for the tap of a servant's knuckles, but it did not come. She wondered what dreadful conference was being held below. She waited for the door to be forced.

Still there was no sound. She could not bear the waiting. She must hear what was going on below. She tiptoed across the room, turned the key back stealthily, and the bolt; and opened the door with all gentleness. She peered through the crevice. There was no one in the upper hall. But the stairway was all alight.

She stepped out and stared at the glistening marble of the balustrade. There was a curious sound as of some animal creeping slowly up the stairway.

Fascinated with terror, she drew near the well of the stairway. Just before she reached it, she heard another sound, an incredible sound as of some one snickering. Then came an explosion of boyish laughter, a loud tintinnabulation like a bell rolling downstairs.

She ran to the rail marveling, and peered over. A lad whose face she could not quite remember, yet almost remembered, was climbing slowly with some effort.

She stared, unbelieving. Then she ran to the head of the stairs and gazed at him. Her knees weakened, and she sat down on the top step, and put out her arms, crying:

"Happy! Happy Hanigan, is it you!"

The boy paused, and a look of disgust erased his huge smile. He growled:

"Aw hell! I was hopin' to surprise you."

"It's you!" she laughed. "Your language gives you away. But how you did surprise me. And oh, how straight you are! And all dressed up! Why, Happy, Happy!"

She ran down further and caught him in her arms with hungry satisfaction. She was too blind with tears to see Clinton Worthing watching upwards from the hall.

The situation was too subtle for Happy. He had counted on being welcomed with a jubilee, not with such noisy sorrow.

"If I'm bodderin' you, by bein' here, I guess I better beat it!" he said. "I told Doctor Woithin' he had a right to warn you I was comin'."

But Muriel clung to him all the harder, hampering him with the uncomfortable awkwardness of a woman's embrace. And she rumbled his sleek hair with her caresses. And she had not even commented on the details of his magnificent costume. And her tears soaked his cheeks with unbecoming salt.

The best she could find to say was:

"You're my boy, aren't you, Happy. I've got you anyway, haven't I? You're my boy. Say it!"

He grumbled:

"Well, o' course I got a mudder already. But I aint got no wife yet. Did you wait like I told you to?"

"Yes, I've waited," she sighed.

"I hope you wont mind waitin' a while longer," Happy said. "I guess you gotta. Me newspaper business is swiped by now, I guess, and it takes time to build it up again. But I'm not crooked any longer. Watch me." He strutted along the wide steps of the stairs. "And I can breathe!" He puffed out his little partridge chest. "Huh! I should worry!"

Muriel's eyes, following his unshackled motions, saw Clinton Worthing at last.

"Clinton!" she exclaimed, and she ran down as he ran up. They met on the first great sweep of the stairway, and their hands gripped hard.

Happy stared at them staring at each other. He grinned:

"Whyn't you kiss him, like you did me?"

Before she quite understood it, Muriel kissed Doctor Worthing. He was so astounded that he almost did a hand-spring backwards.

"I beg your pardon," said Muriel. "I must be crazy."

"I don't care how violent you get," said Worthing.

She led him into the living-room and asked him questions about Happy. She

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gave Happy a book of polar exploration, and he curled up on the big divan under the lamp and looked at pictures till he fell asleep.

He lay in the relaxed grace of all sleeping animals, and he was in such contrast with his former cruel mis-assembly that Muriel felt him to be almost a work of art.

"Has his mother seen him?" she asked. "What did she say?"

"You ought to have heard her. She credited it all to you and me and her other patron saints. She would have had a pair of wings wished onto my shoulder-blades if I hadn't run away. And as for you—well, she puts you right up in the stars."

Muriel was mightily pleased and comforted. She had given one child a new life, and an enlarged hope. If only she had not robbed one man of his life and all his hope. Even while her mouth was smiling, her brows were knit with the old agony, and the tears began to burn her eyes once more. She stared at Worthing with the most poignant regret.

She could see that he loved her, and she could have loved him, if only that ghastly barrier of her deed had not walled them apart.

She wondered why he stared at her so. She was afraid to meet his gaze.

Then she realized that she had left off her lace cap when she ran out to the stairs. In embracing Happy, her hair had been disheveled. While she cried over him, a part of her hair had wept down along her shoulders.

As she began to put it up, she saw that Worthing was staring at her. He turned pale. He must have seen the traces of the penknife in the two or three short strands that she had kept hidden hitherto.

Of all the men in the world she would have chosen him last as the discoverer. And he had seen her ragged hair!

She could think of nothing to say. She had no strength to run. Her teeth chattered, and she was shaken and jolted with queer spasmodic shudders that she could not control.

She huddled wavering and cowering, waiting for him to speak. He was silent

a long time; then his first words were: "May I smoke?"

She nodded, her head dod-doddering ludicrously. Evi-evidently he had something very very important to—say. When her father had s-something im-important to say, he al-always—always li-lighted a cigar first.

II

HIS deliberation was unendurable. He took a cigar from one pocket, a match-box from another, selected a match with care, lighted it, let it burn almost out, then put it to his cigar and brought the cigar to a glow, then rose and moved about, looking for a place to drop the match. Then he walked to the divan where Happy slept, and sauntered to the two doors and looked into the hall and into the drawing-room. Then he walked to Muriel and said in a low voice:

"Are you interested in Perry Merithew, or has all the newspaper sensation tired you out?"

"What do you mean?" she whispered, her ague frozen to ice.

He looked at her with eyes of all tenderness and said:

"While the police and the reporters are looking for the woman who killed him, I have just learned that he was not killed at all. He died of apoplexy."

Muriel sprang to her feet with a little moan like a gush of blood: "Oh, thank God! thank God!" Then she fell forward. His arms saved her and upheld her.

When she was somewhat restored, she began to tremble again.

"Why do you say that? How could you know? Who told you? How could they tell?"

He told her of his investigation, his reasons, his talk with the coroner. He had visited the laboratory of the expert this afternoon. To-morrow the expert would report the result of his findings to the coroner in confidence.

"What he will do," or the police, I don't know."

"What does it matter what they do?" Muriel said. "The one wonderful thing is that he was not killed."



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Worthing did not ask her why this meant so much to her. He smoked while she sat pondering the miracle of release from sin, just breathing the pure air of blood-guiltlessness. That was enough for a while.

At length he said, less from curiosity than from a desire to be of use to her:

"Of course, the police will still be interested in knowing who was with him, and who robbed him of his valuables."

"He wasn't robbed," Muriel whispered. "He gave them—of his own free will—for charity."

Worthing did not ask how she knew this. He was too busy with the jealous pangs of hearing her attribute benevolence to the man. It was not easy to browbeat himself out of a bitter resentment: but he was determined to help her all he could. He went on, his voice colder than his heart was:

"The police will want to know what brought on the stroke of apoplexy, and why the man was beaten over the head, and what the weapon was, and how and why the woman got away, and who she was."

Both of them sat staring at the floor for a long while, then she turned her eyes to him, and he turned his to her. Then her eyes fell, and she murmured:

"You know who the woman was?"

"Yes," he sighed.

"May I tell you in my own way all that happened?"

"For God's sake, do!"

Then she told him in a woman's way, beginning far back, breaking the course of the story with countless digressions and corrections and repetitions. He was tormented by these tests of his patience, but he was soothed by his inability to find a trace of love for Merithew in anything she said.

She carried the history on to the last afternoon, when she had urged Worthing to call on her that evening. She did not need to tell him that if he had obeyed the behest of his love instead of the demand of his profession, she would not now be in the toils of this bloody snare.

She described her careless acceptance of Merithew's invitation to ride in the moonlight. She described the visit to

the slums and her reasons for entering the Allen Street tenement: how she found herself on the roof and what followed there.

She gave Merithew full credit for the gift of his watch and ring and pearl and money. Then she grew bewildered and entangled in the effort to remember in sequence the gradual modulations without a discord from one emotional key to another utterly remote, the strange progress from everything gentle and tender to everything frightful and irrevocable.

"I can't understand him, or myself," she went on. "All I know is that when he said that my hat hid my eyes from him and wanted to lift it off, I wasn't angry as I ought to have been. I was a little flattered, I suppose, and I—I didn't want to be suspicious or harsh, or—oh, I don't know. He was terribly gentle, and I didn't resist him. And then I was—well, dazed. I couldn't quite believe that he was making love to me, and yet it seemed so.

"I nearly stepped off the box, and he caught me, and I thanked him, and he didn't let me go at once, and I was going to step down, because his arms were still around me.

"And then—then he closed his arms so tight I couldn't breathe, and caressed my hair, and I couldn't believe what was happening, till I felt his lips on mine. Then I was mad—fighting mad. I tried to protest, but his lips smothered me, and his fingers were tearing at my hair. I grew fearfully angry, and I began to beat him with my fists. His head fell back, but he clung to my hair, and I struck and pushed and fell, and he struck the chimney and dragged me after him, and there was an awful clatter, and the next thing I knew I was on my hands and knees and trying to tear myself free. He didn't move or speak or groan, even. And his hands grew cold while I tried to open his fingers. And I couldn't get free till I cut my hair with his knife. If only I had died instead of him!"

She was crying again. Her poor eyes seemed still to find tears. But Worthing was magically elated, with the fierce, infernal joy that is exalted upon horror.

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The wretch who had tried to despoil this girl's innocence was struck down. She had fought and hated him, but she had not killed him. He had died of his own sacrilege, sent reeling to earth as one who had touched the Ark of the Covenant.

He did not credit Merithew with any of the self-resistance that had broken his brain as with two twisting hands. He saw only the infamous desire that burnt itself out in the excess of its own flame. That was enough for him. He was not God or a judge; he was an attorney fighting justice for mercy's sake. If he felt any regret, it was that Muriel had not dealt Merithew the fatal blow, instead of accidentally throwing him against a chimney. But Worthing could see that the news he brought her had filled her with divine comfort.

He caught her in his arms ruthlessly. She belonged to him now. He had rescued her. He was very proud of himself. She stared at him.

"You don't despise me? You don't abhor me?" she whimpered.

"I adore you!" he groaned. "You poor little blind, lost, lonesome, poverty-stricken waif of the world."

It was just the sort of thing she longed for more than anything else on earth.

As is usual with lovers, they thought that all the problems of life had been solved.

They sat there thinking so, so blindly that they did not heed Kane, the second man, who appeared at the door, stared, gaped, and vanished. They did not see that Happy Hanigan had wakened, wondered where he was, slowly remembered, peered over the ledge of the divan, stared at the incredible couple, decided he was dreaming, and fallen asleep again with a little moan of luxury.

It was that that changed the turtle-doves back to human beings in a troublesome world.

Muriel broke from Worthing's clasp and ran to Happy, saw how he snuggled in the velvet and silken cushions, heard a clock tinkle midnight, and said:

"It's too late to take him home. He shall sleep here—unless his mother will worry."

"She doesn't expect him. I told her I'd keep him under my care for a few days. I don't want him to go back to Batavia Street."

"He shall never go back there to live," she said. "If I hadn't met him, I should never have met you." She pressed a button in the wall, and when sleepy-eyed Kane appeared, she said:

"Master Hanigan is spending the night here. Put him in the red room. He likes red, I imagine."

Kane bowed, picked up the drowsily protesting boy and toted him upstairs, took off his shoes, valeted him out of his clothes and into a pair of pajamas big enough for three of him. And Happy slept in a bed where an earl, two princesses and any number of aristocrats had slept.

Muriel yawned in Worthing's face. But it was a gorgeous yawn. There were numberless things to be said and done, most of them unpleasant, but both of them thought it better to leave well enough alone for a while.

When Worthing said:

"You are sound asleep already. Go to bed and forget everything till to-morrow. May I come back to see you to-morrow?"

"To-morrow morning, please!" she said. She took him in her arms and said: "I love you," and kissed him. She watched him to the door, and wafted him another kiss, and then climbed sleepily the long white stairway.

CHAPTER XLIII

THE next morning brought back the old ugly facts and new ugly facts. Perry Merithew's serial epitaph was still writ large in the headlines.

The police had captured two fugitives. Aphra Shaler had been apprehended in the mid-West, and Mrs. "Red Ida" Ganley in darkest New Jersey.

When Worthing reached Muriel's home, he found her in a distressful mood. He could not comfort her.

The bliss of being saved from believing herself guilty of Merithew's death was all but forgotten, in these new situations that put her conscience on the rack.

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"What am I to do now?" she wailed. "Those two poor women disgraced and arrested. Suppose the coroner refuses to accept your expert's theory of apoplexy or holds them both under charges of robbery?"

"Don't worry about them. They'll have alibis galore."

"But they may not be believed. I ought to do something. But what?"

Worthing knit his brows awhile before he spoke:

"Of course, the one right thing to do is the thing nobody does: tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth, and trust the people. They'd say, 'The poor girl has suffered enough already.' You would be freed by any jury."

Muriel sniffed:

"I might be freed by a jury after a horrible, unspeakable trial, but I shouldn't be freed by the newspapers. My name would be printed in big letters all over the world. And everybody would sneer at me. I'd be branded for life. Mrs. Merithew would hound me out of the country. If I had children, even, my name would shame them. Nobody would marry me, anyway."

"I'd marry you anyway."

"Oh, you! You're merely taking pity on me. But I've got to take pity on my poor father and mother. All their money wouldn't buy off one headline. It's the newspapers that make life a curse today. You may advise me to trust the people. But you can't advise me to trust the papers, can you?"

"No, I can't," he sighed. The problem was beyond him. Even his moonflower of romance had withered under the morning sun. The thought of marrying this daughter of plutocracy had grown ridiculous under the full light. He could hardly support himself: how could he support two? And one of them a creature of such royal necessities as she!

He tried to plan some discreet way for intervening in behalf of Aphra Shaler and Red Ida, but every scheme imperiled the concealment of Muriel's name. He suggested that Muriel might tell her father and enlist his masterful intellect and his army of lawyers, diplomats and financiers.

But she revolted at the thought. She had told her story to Maryla and to Worthing. The secret had been relieved. There was no comfort in repetition. The thought of telling her father was nausea. She frantically refused. She and Worthing spent the day and the evening in discussing and discarding other plans.

Their pathway was through a plague of locusts. Every step stirred up a cloud of them.

Even Happy Hanigan was something of a grasshopper in his restless curiosity. Muriel sent him out at last for a motor ride—a long one. She told the chauffeur, Jacques Parry, to take him down to Batavia Street and get his mother and spin them both to Coney Island. She told Happy to break the news to his mother as gently as he could—that he was not to go back to selling newspapers in the street, but was to be sent to a private school in the country.

When he was gone, Muriel and Worthing attempted to resume their own mutual courtship, but they were too harrowed and too mutually harrowing to recapture that first careless rapture.

II

THE next afternoon's *Gazette* announced another scoop. Perry Merithew's quondam friend, the girl to whom he gave the amethyst-headed hatpin, Maryla Sokalska, had been run down by the *Gazette* reporter, and was now behind the bars.

In a parallel column with lesser headlines was the first statement of the new theory that Perry Merithew had died of a cerebral hemorrhage. The *Gazette* railed at the far-fetched ruse. Hallard interviewed an imaginary man of prominence, who said:

"What if Merithew did die of apoplexy before he was killed with a blow. That doesn't make the mystery any less. It makes it greater. What brought on the apoplexy? Who was the woman? Why don't the police produce her and ask her why she cracked his skull when he was already dead? And how did she do it when he had her by the hair? How long did he live after



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[411]



she hit him? Why didn't she send some one to his aid? Did he have hold of her hair before she struck him? Or did she think he was dead and bend over to rob him? And then did he grab her by the hair and hold onto her? How did she cut herself loose and where did she go? Why was it nobody saw her? Did she spend the night in the tenement? Or did she escape through the crowded streets? The story of apoplexy only makes it more of a mystery. The police are hired to solve mysteries, not to pile them up. If it were not for the newspapers, the public would have no protection at all. The *Gazette's* activity has been the only bright spot in this dark chapter."

Muriel read this tirade with dismay:

"That's what is waiting for me," she said to the distracted Worthing. "That's the mercy I would get from the newspapers. The prosecuting attorney would tear me to pieces worse than that. You ask me to trust the people. Well, they are people. And listen to the wolves barking and howling and tearing each other to pieces. The newspapers and the police are fighting, but once they found me, how they would thirst for blood."

Then her anger rose: "Where's the justice or the mercy of it? I meant no harm. I went into that place to bring a girl back into her home, and now the girl herself is arrested for murder of a man. She's a widow before she is a wife, and she has an orphan child, and she's in jail. And the papers aren't satisfied with that. They won't let poor Merithew rest in his grave. They won't let him die. They've got to have him killed, so that they can kill some woman. It's human sacrifice they're after still."

"I'm not going to let them get me there. I'll kill myself first. I'll leave a note confessing what I have to confess, so that poor Maryla won't have to suffer any more; then I'll get rid of myself. And if you love me, you'll make it easy for me. You must know some painless way that won't disfigure me. If you love me, you'll help me to escape from this hateful world."

It was not easy for Worthing to bear the sight of her in such tortures: it was not easy for him to coax her back to bravery and wisdom.

The most he could do was to persuade her to defer her self-immolation until he had seen Maryla.

III

HE went to the Tombs and got himself admitted to Maryla's cell on the pretext of being her physician. He had to wait his turn, for her father and mother and her sister and the boarder Pasinsky and her friends the Balinskys were there.

When Worthing reached Maryla at last, she was in need of a physician. He whispered to her, to calm her, that he came from Muriel, who was determined to save her from danger at any cost, even at the cost of proclaiming herself.

This threw Maryla into a panic, and she implored Worthing to compel Muriel to silence. She explained her own plan, her little rabbit device for fooling the hounds. She took great pride in it.

She took great pride also in the announcement that her father had recalled her from the death he had assigned her to, and had taken her into his arms, and had wept till her baby grabbed him by the beard as Maryla had done when she was a baby. And then he laughed and he kissed the baby and said she was his grandbaby.

And Pasinsky had begged her to marry him, and maybe she might yet when she got out once. Anyway, she gave him a promise on it already, so he should stop crying.

But she had not told even him or her parents that she was innocent of Merithew's death.

Before Worthing left her she had another caller, a lawyer who showed her a cablegram from Paris: it was from Dutilh, who was trying to rescue from the stampede of War's alarms the best models of the fashion-creators before the hasty mobilizations threw them into the uniforms of soldiers and marched them off to the frontiers of embattled France.

The cable-letter read:

Paris Herald says my model Maryla arrested Merithew case for god's sake get her out give her my love

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Worthing breathed freelier and put the whole case in the hands of this man. To him he could mention the name of Miss Schuyler in confidence as a friend of Maryla's who felt responsible for her safety, since she had brought her to Dutilh's notice and unwittingly to Merithew's.

IV

THE police were relying still on the magnificent old method of arresting everybody that could be suspected, subjecting the prisoners to all the inquisition they could devise, more or less reminding them that what they said would be used against them, and forcing the innocent to prove their innocence. This is usually easy but not always pleasant. It was not pleasant for Red Ida and Aphra Shaler.

They nearly lost Aphra en route, for in the drawing room of the sleeper she entertained the fascinated detective with that superhuman naïveté which had fooled even Perry Merithew.

She told how the handsome devil had lured her from her home in the most innocent and sweetest of villages; how he had promised her marriage, and she had learned too late that he was wed to another; of how he blinded her with promises to marry her as soon as he could unmarry himself from the cold and indiffer'nt sussietty woman to whom he was bound.

"And so he kept me a prisoner. And then he threw me overboard for somebody else when I was no longer of use to him. And as if he hadn't done enough to ruin my life, he goes and gets himself killed in the slums, where heaven knows anybody who knew me could have told the police I would never have went—gone!

"And all I have to show for my ruined life is a few old-fashioned clothes and a jewel or two—I wonder did he leave me anything in his will? Oh, I tell you, John—" By this time she was calling the detective by his individual as well as generic name of John. "Oh, I tell you, John, it's a cruel world, and it's always the woman gets it. The woman pays and pays—"

If the journey had been an hour longer, the detective would probably have offered to marry her himself and take flight with her to some country where innocence was respected. But New York was reached in time.

And in time Aphra submitted a perfect alibi, although a somewhat painful one to the fat gentleman whom she had abandoned on the beach for Perry Merithew, but had recaptured in time for the dinner the handsome devil had refused her.

Her affidavit and his afterwards served his wife as perfect evidence in a divorce suit. Now Aphra had matriculated in the co-respondent's school and her future was full of assurance.

When little Red Ida Ganley was starved out and nabbed by a detective, she made no effort to flirt with him or prate of innocence. They had her record, her finger-prints and her photograph from various angles.

She faced the police as a game little cat faces a pack of terriers. They have her at their mercy, but they are sure to get their noses scratched.

"Well, boys, go to it," she said. "You're goin' to gimme the thoid degree, I suppose. Gimme a cig'et foist, will you? 'At's the boy! Now begin to commence. What am I wanted for?"

"The murder of Perry Merithew."

"Oh, rully? Great! You never railroaded me for no swell crime before. Sorry, boys, but I never sor that gempmun."

"Ah, none of that, Ide. I seen you myself dancin' with him," one of the plainclothes men broke in.

"Oh, hello, Cutie—did you? Is that so? Well, a lady like me who's a dancer by perfession has gotta dance with all kinds of guys. It's gettin' to be too promiscurous for me."

They laughed at her lovingly, but they shook their heads.

"I guess you and that coke-consumin' furnace of yours have gotta stand trile," they said. "It happened right in your little districk, too."

She had to confess at last that she had been arrested for picking a pocket in Yonkers during the evening crush in Getty Square. She had gone there to

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dance and lost her way. She had inquired it of a kind old gent with a watch-chain big enough for a watchdog. She just had to have a try at it. She had been locked up for the night and released the next day because the nice old gent had believed her promises of reform and refused to appear against her. She admitted with deep humiliation that she had not been recognized by the copper or by the beak on the bench. She sighed:

"Nobody's famous far from home."

"But why did you hide in New Jersey?"

"I was ashamed to be caught in Yonkers. I knew you'd be after me for this job. You always are. And I didn't want to have to use no bum alibi like that for fear you'd gimme the laugh. I guess I'd rather you sprung me now than put it in the paper like I told you."

They telephoned the Yonkers headquarters and learned that an innocent-looking, frail little red-headed girl had indeed been arrested for lifting a watch, and had been released since it was her first offense. And so they laughed Red Ida out of jeopardy.

Maryla's alibi was of a different sort. The venerable Sister Superior visited her in her cell and identified her and her child and proved that she had spent that fatal night, and the other nights till her arrest, in the ward among the other mothers with their babies at breast.

Nobody questioned her, and Maryla went forth. She married Henryk Pasinski, and they started life on a mysterious dowry.

And now the cells were empty and the police had no one else to arrest. They ran hither and yon with the lash of the newspapers crackling about their ears.

CHAPTER XLIV

MURIEL SCHUYLER read the papers and noted the enlarging circle of suspicion. She grew desperate for something to do to take her mind from herself.

At that moment of desperation for her, the war broke forth in Europe, and all the world shook with conflict.

The simoom that destroyed the multitudes diverted attention from one anx-

ious girl. It quenched the creeping flames of publicity on the instant, and drove the name of Perry Merithew from the front page, or any page.

When millions were marching against millions to be shot, mangled, starved, what did it matter that a certain man had been found on a roof with the hair of an uncertain woman in his hands?

America, suffering under prolonged hard times, found itself in financial chaos, yet with all the world turning toward it as the home of peace and plenty. Thousands of Americans abroad were crying: "Send us ships and money and food and get us home."

From Belgium, Poland and all the nations the cries came jangling: "Send us food, send us clothes, medicines, money, guns, powder, motors, horses, nurses, doctors, bankers."

Everything merely national, local, individual, lost importance. The papers dismissed reporters by the score. Hallard went overboard with the rest.

And then, as always happens when the basest qualities of man flourish, the purest and the noblest qualities also arose to keep the old-time balance of good and bad.

If there never was so futile, so destructive, so mad a war, neither was there ever so beautiful, so heroic, so enormous a charity. The oceans that saw the dreadnoughts, and the airships, and the submarines, saw also the fleets of pity, the swan-ships carrying the grails of rescue.

Muriel saw her opportunity—everything at once. She would not rest content with subscribing money, and working up festivals, and knitting mufflers, and feeding hungry reservists stranded in town. She would take a ship across to the aid of the wounded soldiers.

When she told Worthing, he worshiped her for the inspiration and for the power, but he groaned:

"If you go as a nurse, I'm going as a surgeon."

"That was my idea," she said. "You shall be the chief surgeon of my crew of surgeons, and you shall at last be paid as you deserve."

"Who's going to pay me?" he asked a bit dubiously.



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"My father," she said, without doubt.
 "Glorious! When did you tell him?"
 "To-morrow morning."

II

WHAT Muriel might have done if she had been free of mind and heart, she was the more impelled to do now that her prayer was for an escape from the peril of detection, and the torment of inaction.

She went to her father and said:

"Buy me a ship and fit it out so that I can fill it with nurses and doctors and hurry over to Europe and help those poor soldiers lying out there dying in swarms."

Jacob stared as if she were demented.

"Why on earth should you risk your health and your life on such a mad crusade? Stay home where you are safe."

"But I am not safe at home. I am afraid, and in great danger."

"Nonsense!"

And then she told him. It was black news to him, and it almost crushed him. But after the long torture of learning the truth, he had the solaces of believing his girl-child innocent of guile; he had the comfort of saying he had warned her against Merithew; he had the monopolist's privilege of making her promise not to tell her mother.

Partly from eagerness to have her out of the reach of any accidental stroke of detective luck, and more because of the precious opportunity that gladdened her, he granted her her ship.

It was the most expensive toy he had ever bought her. He told her it would have to be her Christmas present and her birthday present both. He made himself responsible for the salaries of the physicians and the nurses and the crew, and for the coal and provisions, and the bandages and instruments and all.

He had the solace next of telling her mother of the scheme, and of bearing the brunt of Susan's indignation. Susan poured out the phials and the magnum of her wrath on Jacob, and when Muriel appeared demurely, Susan had nothing left to say except a feeble:

"You couldn't possibly go without a chaperon."

"Why not?"

"You're not married."

"If I were married, it would be all right?"

"It would be at least correct."

"I see."

Muriel telephoned to Worthing and explained her mother's scruples. She had called him from a complication of tasks, and his mind was not clear. He did not take the hint at all. Muriel repeated the message:

"My mother says if I were married, it would be all right."

"Yes, so you said. That makes it rather awkward, doesn't it?"

"Does it? I thought it made it rather simple."

"How do you mean, dear?"

"You've been helping yourself to my young affections so freely, recently, that I had an idea you were planning to marry me yourself. But of course if you were merely philandering, good-by!"

"Oh, Good Lord, wait! Muriel, honey, darling, name the day, the hour, the minute!"

"Is this afternoon at three too soon?"

"How can I wait so long?"

"Can I trust you to get the license and the ring, if I provide a parson?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Then the wedding will be at our home at three. Remember. Better write down the name and the address."

"I'll be there. God bless you!"

"Thanks ever so much. Good-by."

He borrowed some money of Doctor Eccleston to pay for the license, the jewelry, and the necessary taxicabs. He promised to remit the loan out of his first pay as chief surgeon of the expedition. He reached the house with the document and the implement and a heart all ready for the sacrament.

He had forgotten to robe himself as a bridegroom and to provide a better man, so Muriel drafted Winnie Nicolls, who happened to be calling. Winnie found it a most distasteful service, but he bore it like a thoroughbred.

The bride was all in white. It pleased her to wear her new uniform. The only color was the red cross on the sleeve.



DO YOU remember—years ago—when mother slipped the kitchen bowl over our heads and clipped that fringe of hair beneath—and followed with a good shampoo?

Do you remember her kneading the lather into *your* stubborn little head? You squirmed, but she rubbed the more. She *knew*. She was aiding the hair-roots to get good, rich blood and helping the scalp to *breathe* as well.

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III

WHEN the ship was ready to go, it was visited by a covey of reporters and photographers and moving-picture men.

Among them was Hallard, who had been granted the job as a special commission to help out his poverty.

Muriel underwent the ordeal of the interview with unaffected meekness and pride, and to the great satisfaction of Hallard.

She was one of the few women of the wealthy (or of any) group that Hallard did not despise. He had already decided upon two or three fervent epithets in her praise as his little farewell garland.

He was afraid that he might forget them, and as he did not want to be caught taking notes, he found a deserted passageway between two deck cabins and began to make a few memoranda surreptitiously.

Muriel and Worthing, released from the interview, were pacing up and down the deck of their private ship like Columbus and Isabella.

A gust of wind snatched off Muriel's official cap, and she fell back against the cabin and waited laughing while Worthing ran for it and chased it down the scuppers.

The brisk air tugged and clutched at her hair till it loosened a long coil of it unknown to her, and fluttered it against the wall of the cabin.

Hallard stared. He could see no marks of any cutting, but the color of it terrified him. It would be easy to take out his knife and draw the blade across a bit of it for further study. It would be safer still to place alongside it the little strand he carried in his pocketbook, the little strand he had stolen from Perry Merithew's fingers.

He caught out his pocketbook and lifted out the copper threads from the

envelope. And then he paused. What if it should prove true that she was the one? What good could it do him or Merithew or the world to be assured of this? What endless wretchedness it would involve!

He was afraid.

He stared at the fatal silken fibers a long moment. Then he opened his hand and let the wind take them.

Dr. Worthing came back laughing with the nurse's cap, and Muriel laughingly gathered her hair together and fastened it under the little white helmet of mercy.

Hallard slunk away in a mood of craven shame: he had been guilty of treachery to his paper; he had been false to the sacred priestcraft of publishing the secrets of the few for the entertain-

ment of the many. Dejected and miserable he trudged across the gangplank, wondering.

And the ship went down the river and across the bay and out into the sea.

ON an evening when the voyage was about half done, the moon being under a cloud, Muriel came out of her cabin alone. She

carried under her cloak an old doll. She opened a seam in the skirt of it, with the scissors hanging at her belt, and she took from the rags inside, a watch, and a pearl pin, and a diamond ring. These she dropped into the ocean, and thought a little prayer over them, and sighed: "Poor Perry Merithew!"

She took the doll back to the cabin, and had just finished sewing up the seam again, when her husband came in and said as he kissed her—not having seen her for almost half an hour:

"What's all that?"

"Just an old doll of mine, honey. I brought it along to give to some poor little Belgian kid."

"You're always thinking of children," he said.

Rupert Hughes

is working on a novel bigger in inspiration and more unusual in theme than either "What Will People Say?" or "Empty Pockets." It will begin soon as a serial in *The Red Book Magazine*. Watch for it.